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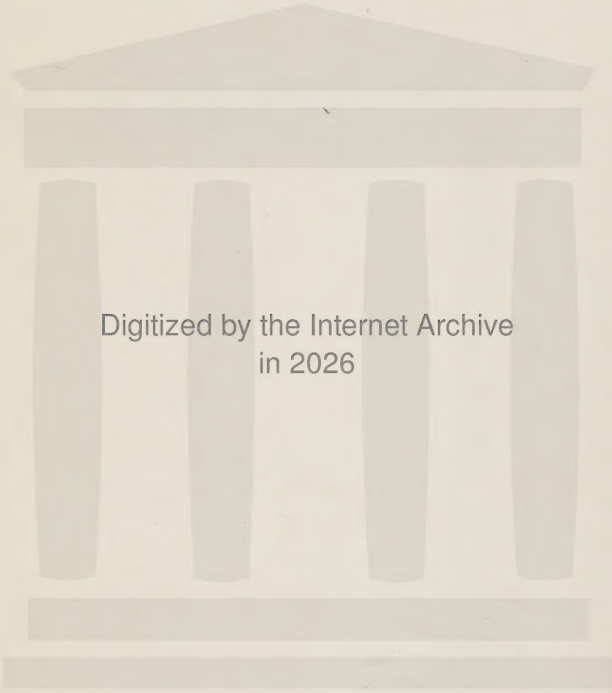
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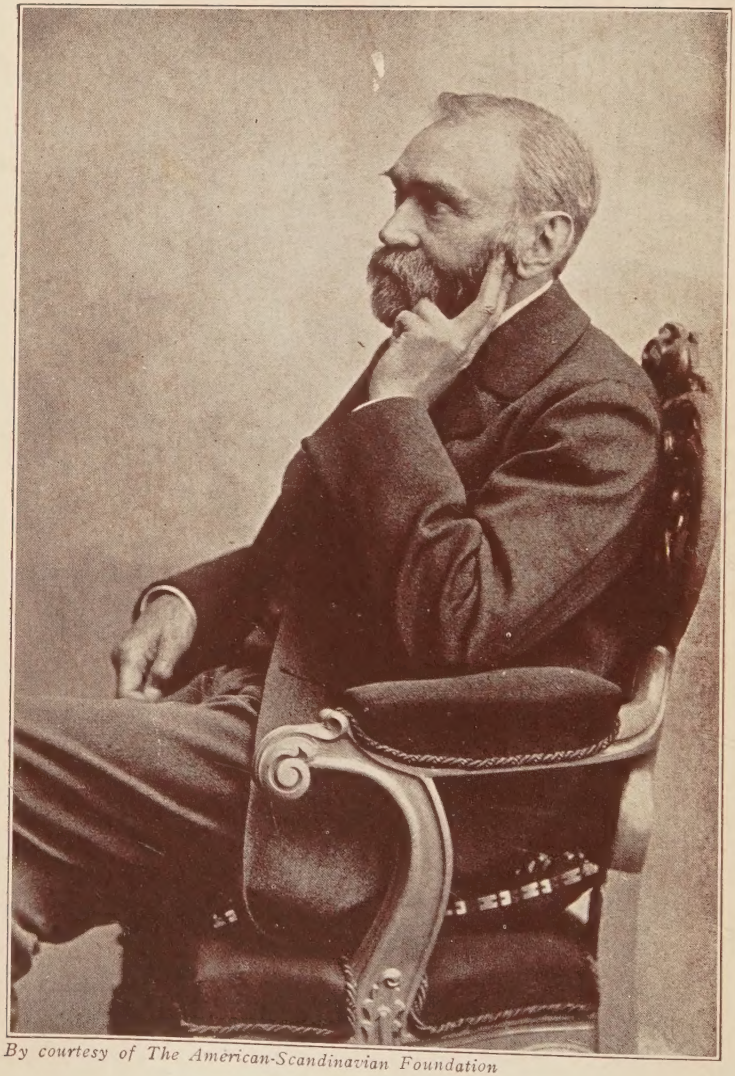

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ALFRED NOBEL

THE NOBEL PRIZE WINNERS IN LITERATURE

By ANNIE RUSSELL MARBLE

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PREFACE

These studies of Nobel Prize Winners in Literature have been the result of research for several years and lectures upon the subject in University Extension courses, before college clubs and other groups. The vast scope of the subject suggests temerity in one who attempts to treat it in such limited space. The writer realizes the inadequacy of the book and possible conflicting statements because of diverse authorities that have been consulted. After careful "siftings," it is offered as an incentive to further study, as a roadmap to many paths of literary research. Biographical data and brief criticism of the authors' works are followed by a bibliography which is suggestive rather than exhaustive.

The writer of these chapters has been, in large measure, the recorder of research by many individuals and educational institutions, with personal deductions from wide reading. Among many books that have been stimulating are *Creative Spirits of the Nineteenth Century* by Georg Brandes, *Studies from Ten Literatures* by Ernest Boyd, books upon the drama and translations by John Garrett Underhill, Ludwig Lewisohn

and Barrett H. Clark, and studies of Knut Hamsun by Josef Wiehr and Hanna Arstrup Larsen. Other specific books of interpretation are emphasized in text and footnotes, as well as in bibliography.

Gratitude that defies fitting words would be here expressed to Miss Anna C. Reque of the Bureau of Information of the American-Scandinavian Foundation, to the Svenska Akademien Nobelinstitut of Stockholm, to Mrs. Velma Swanston Howard, Miss Svea Boson and Thekla E. Hodge for translations, to Mr. R. F. Sharp of the British Museum, to Eugen Diederichs Verlag in Jerla, to The Danish National Library, Copenhagen, to Prof. Josef Wiehr, Prof. Kuno Francke, Francis Rooney, Esq., to Mr. Theodore Sutro, Mr. Rupert Hughes, Miss Harriet C. Marble, and to librarians of the Widener Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Miss Grace W. Wood, Mrs. Helen Abbott Beals, and to librarians of the Widener Library, Cambridge, Library of Congress, New York Public Library, Free Public Library of Worcester and many other sources of encouragement and coöperation.

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Worcester, Massachusetts,
September, 1925

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THE NOBEL PRIZE WINNERS IN LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

ALFRED NOBEL: THE CONDITIONS OF HIS WILL AND LITERARY RESULTS

Nobilius was the ancestral name, by tradition, of that family whose representative, Alfred Nobel, has left a name synonymous with inventiveness and large benefactions to humanity. The grandfather, Imanuel, an army surgeon, is accredited with changing the family name to *Nobel*. His son, Emanuel, father of Alfred, taught science in Stockholm, as a young man. With inventive ability he experimented with explosives, submarine mines, and other destructive forces and, by paradox, became designer of surgical appliances and India-rubber cushions to relieve suffering. He was interested in ship construction and spent some time in Egypt. To his sons he transmitted his spirit of scientific research, with all the dangers as well as the inspiration of such ambition. Two explosions, during experiments with nitroglycerine and other chemicals,

caused severe loss. The first, occurring about 1837 in Stockholm, shattered the nerves of the people as well as their windows, so that Emanuel went to Russia, on the advice of friends prominent in affairs of industry and government. Here he was employed by the Russians to continue his experiments with submarine mines; with his family, he remained here until after the Crimean War, contributing to naval warfare by his inventions. An older son, Ludwig, remained in Russia when his family returned to Sweden. This son gained repute as an engineer and discovered the petroleum springs at Baku.[1] A second explosion in one of the factories of Sweden, in 1864, caused the death of a younger son of Emanuel Nobel and shocked the father so severely that he was an invalid physically for the rest of his life.

Alfred Bernhard Nobel was born at Stockholm in 1833. He was less robust than his brothers; he was sensitive and nervous, suffering from headaches all his life. His mother, Karoline Henriette Ahlssell, was his devoted comrade from the early days when he would lie on the couch while she read to him or told him sagas and hero-stories. She was wise and happy by nature, confident that Alfred would become "a great man," in spite of poor physique and moods of depression. He never married, although he loved a young

[1] *Westminster Review*, 156, 642.

girl who died in her youth, but he was devoted to his mother to the end of her life. Letters and frequent visits to her in Sweden, in his later life, kept alive his affectionate nature and his idealism.

Like his father he showed studious interest in chemistry, physics, and mechanical engineering. Shipbuilding attracted his attention for a time and, when he was about seventeen, he was sent to the United States to increase his knowledge of mechanics, as applied to ships, by association with John Ericsson. At the home of the latter on Franklin Street, New York, where a tablet has been placed to commemorate the services of this inventor in the Civil War, young Nobel lived for a time. His father sent him to John Ericsson in order to investigate an invention of his, an engine which was supposed to work by heat from the sun. He stayed several months, probably not more than a year. Ericsson was passing through a period of fluctuating fortunes. At the end of 1849 his balance was only $132.32—his total receipts for the year had been but $2,000. Two years later he recorded a balance of $8,690.10. In the interval he had sold several patents and had received congratulations from the King of Sweden upon the great future for his "test caloric engine." This was the goal of his experiments during these years; its success was to be tested in the trial trip of *The Ericsson,* February 11,

1853. A squall came up as the boat was launched and making headway, and it sank, carrying with it hopes of the inventor after years of experiment, and half a million dollars of invested capital. Ericsson was crushed for a few weeks. How pluckily he recovered his courage, made his plans for *The Monitor,* offered that to the United States government and won success for the cause of the North, is familiar history. [2]

Upon Alfred Nobel, with his quick, impressionable temperament, this direct contact with Ericsson must have left strong influences. Perhaps he decided then that, should fortune favor him, he would leave a fund to aid scientists in their experiments and to protect them against financial duress during periods of discouragement. When he returned to Sweden and Russia, he coöperated with his father and brothers in manufacturing nitroglycerine and other explosives; he was constantly seeking for a compound which would be more powerful and less dangerous. In 1857, at St. Petersburg, he had taken out a patent for a gasometer. It has been said that the discovery of what was later known as dynamite came by accident to Alfred Nobel, during an experiment about 1865–66. Some nitroglycerine had escaped into the siliceous sand of the

[2] *The Life of John Ericsson* by William Conant Church, 2 Vols., New York, 1901.

packing and this brought about a partial solution of his problem. Dynamite, which was composed of 75 per cent nitroglycerine and 25 per cent kieselguhr, or infusorial earth, was produced. He applied for patents in several countries, and sought for funds to start factories which he believed would make a fortune by manufacture of this new explosive. It was sometimes called "Nobel's blasting-oil." He told French bankers that he had invented "an oil that would blow up the world"; a facetious commentator declared, "French bankers thought it for their interest to leave the globe undisturbed" and refused him credit. [3]

Napoleon III became interested and arranged for funds for Nobel's factories in France. With some samples of dynamite in his hand bag, Alfred Nobel came to the United States on the same commercial mission. New York hotels received him with suspicion because of rumors about the "deadly explosive"; he went to California where, through the aid of Dr. Bandman, a friend of Nobel's brother, a factory was started near Los Angeles. In a few years manufactories were in operation in Italy, Spain, France and Scotland, as well as England and Sweden. When Alfred Nobel was forty years old he was making his fortune out of this "giant powder." For several years he lived in Paris where he had laboratories for

[3] Vance Thompson, in *Cosmopolitan,* September, 1906.

further experiments with gelatin, balastite, and forms of smokeless powder. In his later home, in San Remo, he carried on developments and took out more patents in petroleum and artificial gutta-percha. He received the tribute of scientists and educators but the ignorant people regarded him with a mixture of awe and fear—"he had put the long hammer of Thor to work again among the giants."

In spite of his inspiring life-work and many successes, in spite of his wealth and honors, Alfred Nobel was a lonely man. His health was unstable; he often worked with bandaged head and in intense pain, accentuated by the gaseous fumes of his laboratory. He was self-distrustful and fearful that people were attracted to him *only* by his wealth. One of the few individuals who gained and kept his confidence was Baroness Bertha von Suttner. In her *Memoirs* the personality of Alfred Nobel is revealed in comments and letters. She came to him in response to an advertisement in a Paris newspaper, asking for a secretary for "a very wealthy, cultured gentleman." She remained only a few days in her joint capacity of secretary and housekeeper, for a happy solution of her interrupted romance with the Baron von Suttner eventuated in her speedy marriage. She exchanged letters and visits with Alfred Nobel for many years and was devoted to him in life and in memory. She

describes him as somewhat below average height, without physical attractiveness but in no sense "repulsive," as he imagined himself to be. He was a fine linguist, somewhat of a philosopher, a good conversationalist and entertaining as a story-teller. He allowed her to read a long philosophical poem which he had written in English and she found it "simply splendid." He was critical of the shallow, false-hearted people, especially those who importuned him with low motives; but he had faith in a better development of humanity as education progressed. One of his few intellectual companions in Paris was Madame Juliette Adams, author and editor of the *Nouvelle Revue;* at her salon in Rue Juliet, Nobel would meet, occasionally, men of science and letters.

In the *Memoirs* of Baroness von Suttner may be located the first intimations of Nobel's motives which led to the Nobel prizes, especially the specific form which was known as "the Peace Prize." It will be recalled that the Baroness von Suttner was one of the early winners of this prize by her widely-read romance, *Die Waffen nieder* (*Lay Down Your Arms!*). In 1890, after the publication of this story, advocating world peace, Nobel wrote letters of high commendation. On another occasion he said to her, "I wish I could produce a substance or a machine of such

frightful efficacy for wholesale devastation that wars should thereby become altogether impossible." [4] He contended, with the mind of a prophet, that a day might come when "two army corps may mutually annihilate each other in a second"; then he believed that "all civilized nations will recoil and disband their troops." On January 7, 1893, three years before his death, he wrote to the Baroness from Paris.[5] "I should like to dispose of a part of my fortune by founding a prize to be granted every five yèars—say six times, for if in thirty years they have not succeeded in reforming the present system they will infallibly relapse into barbarism. . . . If the Triple Alliance, instead of comprising only three states, should enlist all states, the peace of the centuries would be assured." Affirming his belief in "reasonable Socialism," he deplored the custom of leaving large fortunes to heirs: too often the results were lapses in mental ambitions and industry.

On December 10, 1896, Alfred Nobel died suddenly in his workshop at San Remo. For a long time he had realized his condition of reduced vitality. He consulted doctors unwillingly and heeded their counsel with reluctance. He kept a record of his own pulse

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[4] *Memoirs of Bertha von Suttner; Records of an Eventful Life,* Vol. I, p. 210, New York, 1910. By permission of Ginn & Co.

[5] *Ibid.,* Vol. I, p. 438.

and heart action but he never desisted from a full day's work in his laboratory. His last letters have a sad note that is sometimes sarcastic yet he kept faith in and with humanity to the last. He had been carefully considering the disposal of his fortune, determined that it should contribute to progress in science and literature, for the welfare of mankind and the education towards world peace. His will startled the civilized world by its originality and idealism. The man who had been most successful in inventing elements of destruction, by a paradox, had left most of his large fortune to constructive, creative purposes.

Because he distrusted many lawyers he had been his own legal adviser in large measure; sometimes he had acted as his own secretary, lest an outsider might abuse his confidence. In appointing M. Ragnar Sohlmann as executor, he explained that here "was a man who had never asked anything of me." (Later the manager of the factory at Bergen became associate executor.) He left legacies of five thousand pounds each to his nephews but some efforts to "break the will" were threatened. Emanuel, then head of the family, refused to sanction such interference and, after many complications and delays, the will was allowed, and varied equivocal, or impractical, conditions were interpreted by "Code of Statutes," issued by the King of Sweden, June 29, 1900.

From this pamphlet is quoted here the extract from the will:[6] "Extract from the Will and Testament of Dr. Alfred Bernhard Nobel, Engineer, which was drawn on the 27th day of November, 1895: 'With the residue of my convertible estate I hereby direct my executors to proceed as follows: They shall convert my said residue of property into money, which they shall then invest in safe securities; the capital thus secured shall constitute a fund, the interest accruing from which shall be annually awarded in prizes to those persons who shall have contributed most materially to benefit mankind during the year immediately preceding. The said interest shall be divided into five equal amounts, to be apportioned as follows: one share to the person who shall have made the most important discovery or invention in the domain of Physics; one share to the person who shall have made the most important chemical discovery or improvement; one share to the person who shall have made the most important discovery in the domain of Physiology or Medicine; one share to the person who shall have produced in the field of Literature the most distinguished work of an idealistic tendency; and finally, one share to the person who shall have most

[6] Nobel Stiftelson, The Nobel Foundation, Code of Statutes given at the Royal Palace in Stockholm on June 29, 1900 (Stockholm, 1901). Objects of the Foundation. From copy in Library of Congress.

or best promoted the Fraternity of Nations and the Abolishment or Diminution of Standing Armies and the Formation and Increase of Peace Congresses.'"

In further details the will provides: "The prizes for Physics and Chemistry shall be awarded by the Swedish Academy of Science in Stockholm; the one for Physiology or Medicine by the Caroline Medical Institute in Stockholm; the one for Literature by the Academy in Stockholm (*i.e.* Svenska Akademien) and that for Peace by a Committee of five persons to be elected by the Norwegian Storthing. I declare it to be my express desire that in the awarding of prizes, no consideration whatever be paid to the nationality of the candidates, that is to say, that the most deserving be awarded the prize, whether of Scandinavian origin or not."

Because of difficulties in interpreting certain sections and elucidating other phrases, this Code of Statutes was drawn up "in consultation with a representative, nominated by Robert Nobel's family, and submitted to consideration of the King." After adjustments of interests had been "amicably entered into" by the testator's heirs, June 5, 1898, it was decreed that "The instructions of the will above as set forth shall serve as a criterion for the administration of the Foundation (Nobel) in conjunction with the elucidations and further stipulations contained in this Code." One

"stipulation" was that "each of the annual prizes founded by the said will shall be awarded at least once during each ensuing five-year period after the year in which the Nobel Foundation comes into force." The phrase used by Nobel in the words relating to the prize in Literature, "the Academy at Stockholm," was interpreted "as understood to be the Swedish Academy—Svenska Akademien." Another significant explanation was—the "term, 'Literature,' used in the will shall be understood to embrace not only works falling under the category of Polite Literature, but also other writings which may claim to possess literary value by reason of their form or their mode of exposition." This last provision, which seems elastic and somewhat vague, has not led thus far to undue difficulties and criticisms.

The phrase "during the preceding year," as applied to scientific and literary achievements alike, was a strange, impractical provision which was well interpreted broadly in the Code thus: "only such works or inventions shall be eligible as have appeared 'during the preceding year' is to be understood, that a work or invention for which a reward under the terms of the will is contemplated, shall set forth the *most modern results* of work being done in that of the departments as defined in the will to which it belongs; works or inventions of older standing to be taken into con-

sideration only in case their importance has not previously been demonstrated."

Two other stipulations were made that have been applied to the awards in literature, as elsewhere, "The amount allotted to one prize may be divided equally between two works submitted, should each of such works be deemed to merit a prize." Thus, in 1904, the prize was divided between José Echegaray, the Spanish dramatist, and Frederic Mistral, the poet of Provence; again, in 1917, it was divided between two Danish writers, Gjellerup and Pontoppidan. On the other hand, if all of the "works under examination fail to attain to the standard of excellence" required, no award need be given that year, the "amount added to the main fund or may be set aside to form a special fund for that of one of the sections to promote the object of the testator." In 1914 and 1918 there were no awards in literature.

To facilitate impartial judgment it was directed that each of the four sections of the Swedish corporation of award "shall appoint a committee—their Nobel Committee—of three or five members to make suggestions with reference to the award." To be a member of this Nobel Committee one need not be "a Swedish subject or member of the Corporation." "How are these candidates for prizes nominated?" is a frequent question. It is stated explicitly in this

Code of Statutes, section 7: "It is essential that every candidate for a prize under the terms of the will, be proposed as such in writing by some duly qualified person. A direct application for a prize will not be taken into consideration." Further explanations are given of "qualifications entitling a person to propose another for the receipt of a prize"—he must be "a representative, whether Swedish or otherwise, of the domain of Science, Literature, etc. in question and the grounds for the award must be stated in writing." In this same Code of Statutes, in a later section (p. 23) there is expanded information regarding "The right to nominate a candidate for the prize-competition" —this shall "belong to Members of the Swedish Academy and the Academies in France and Spain which are similar to it in constitution and purpose; members also of the humanistic classes of other Academies and of those humanistic institutions and societies that are on the same footing as academies, and teachers of æsthetics, literature and history at universities and colleges." For publicity it was provided that these "regulations shall be publicly announced at least every five years in some official or widely circulated journals in each of the three Scandinavian countries and in the chief countries of the civilized world." The names of candidates must be presented by February first of each year.

Although the successful candidates for the various prizes are usually "broadcasted," in these days of shrewd journalism, sometime in November, the official announcements of the awards are made on "Founder's Day," the tenth of December, the anniversary of the death of the testator. "At this time the adjudicators shall make known the result of their award and shall hand over to the winners of the prizes a cheque for the amount of the same, together with a diploma and a medal in gold, bearing the testator's effigy and a suitable legend." The last word may be more freely translated, *inscription.* In further explanation the Code of Statutes decrees: "It shall be incumbent on a prize winner, whenever feasible, to give a lecture on the subject treated of in the work to which the prize has been awarded, such lecture to take place within six months of the Founder's Day at which the prize was won, and to be given at Stockholm or, in the case of the Peace prize, at Christiania." This feature of the award has not often been "feasible" in literature, although a few of the winners have received the prizes in person at Stockholm and made fitting responses, as we shall note in later chapters. The decree is final:[7] "Against the decision of the adjudicators in making their award no protest can be lodged. If differences of opinion have occurred they shall not appear in the

[7] *Ibid.,* section 10.

minutes of the proceedings, nor in any other way be made public." To assist in their investigations and to further the "aims of the Foundation, the adjudicators shall possess powers to establish scientific institutes and other organizations. The institutes so established and belonging to the Foundation, shall be known under the name of Nobel Institutes."

While the general administration of the funds and awards rests with the Nobel Foundation, consisting of five persons ("one of whom, the President, shall be appointed by the King and the others by the delegates of the adjudicating corporations") the specific work of investigation and judgment rests with the organization cited in the will. In literature, the "prizes are assigned" by the Swedish Academy, after careful investigation by its members, and the assistance of the Nobel Institute and Librarian. A large collection of books, mostly of modern writings, forms the Library. In all languages, translations, when necessary, are found here, also reports concerning works of recent publication. The Swedish Academy was founded by King Gustavus III in 1786. It has devoted itself to "the arts of elocution and poetry, to the preservation of purity, force and elevation of diction in the Swedish language both in scientific works and products of pure literature. Annual prizes have been offered, for scores of years, in elocution and poetry. Eighteen members,

all Swedes, comprise this Academy, of which the King is patron. He appoints the Inspector of the Nobel Institute of the Swedish Academy but its "immediate management is by a member of the Academy, chosen by that body."

Two conditions of the will of Alfred Nobel have been faithfully followed—the recipients in all branches have done something (if not "most") "to benefit humanity"; in the second place, "no consideration whatever has been paid to the nationality of the candidates," in the way of favoritism. The most reasonable criticism of the awards, especially in literature, has been a failure to carry out what seems to have been the assumed, but not expressed, desire of the donor, namely, to *stimulate* work as well as to *reward* past achievements. Otherwise, why that puzzling phrase about "the year preceding"? Not wholly without foundation is the comment that too many of the awards in literature have been "tombstones rather than stepping-stones." Many of the earlier recipients were past seventy, with productive faculties low, before the honor. It is a satisfaction to the public to know that a worthy writer has had world recognition before he dies, and that his last days may have many comforts possible through the financial award of about $40,000—but such conditions do not seem in accord with the spirit of the Nobel will and the attitude of

the donor toward creative work. The awards have been too often retroactive rather than stimulating to further writing. Other winners, as will be noted later, have accomplished vigorous literature, *after* the award as well as *before* the honor.

During the years from 1901, when the first prizes were given, to 1925, twelve nationalities have been represented in literature. Germany and France have had the largest percentages in awards: Spain, Italy, Poland, Norway, Sweden have had two winners each. Great Britain (including the awards to Rabindranath Tagore and to Yeats as well as Kipling) has been thrice honored. Denmark divided the prize one year; Switzerland came into the lists with her poet, Carl Spitteler. In science and "promotion of peace," America has such names on the roster of honor as A. A. Michelson in physics, T. W. Richards in chemistry, Dr. Alexis Carrel in medicine, and Theodore Roosevelt, Elihu Root and Woodrow Wilson in the "peace prize."

What have been the influences of the will of Alfred Nobel and the awards upon international literature? An unquestioned result has been to arouse both curiosity and aspiration among writers and readers. No other prizes, among any peoples, have caused such widespread interest. The announcement of the Nobel prizes each year has become an event of outstanding

significance. Journals enter into competition, in recent years, to get the first word over the wires and to publish the most informing articles upon the winners. Tense interest precedes and follows the awards. Whatever may be one's individual opinion about the justice in every instance, the fact remains that the chosen writer becomes the center of study and discussion for the current season and later years. To some critics this method of appreciation is offensive; sometimes it may seem to be a sensational "thrust into the limelight" of an insignificant or mediocre writer. In the majority of cases, the result is like that of a strong telescope which can distinguish the "fixed stars from the meteors" in the literary horizon.

The second influence is upon writers of every nationality—an incentive to produce "a distinguished work of an idealistic tendency," some book which will prove of "benefit to humanity." This term, idealistic, is difficult to render in all languages. In the French explanation of the will, it is explicit, "le plus remarquable dans le sens de l'idéalisme." It is not easy to justify the prizes in literature, in several cases, if one emphasizes the usual meaning of "idealistic." Occasionally, the award was given for some less recent work, some hitherto unappreciated note of idealism in an earlier writing. Two examples, among many, are Björnson's tales of peasant life, with interwoven

sagas and poetry, *Arne* and *A Happy Boy,* or Mistral's *Mireio,* the pastoral poem of Provence which was written more than forty years before the prize was given. In these two cases, as will be noted later, there was appreciation of efforts to rescue a dialect or language from literary desuetude. Upon both writers and readers, the influence of the Nobel awards in literature has been to promote broader interests and sympathies, more earnest study of standards and aspirations in widely separated races.

CHAPTER II

POETS OF FRANCE AND PROVENCE

The prize of 1901 has been awarded:

Sully-Prudhomme, René François Armand, member of the French Academy, born 1839, died September 7, 1907: "as an acknowledgment of his excellent merit as an author, and especially of the high idealism, artistic perfection, as well as the unusual combination of qualities of the heart and genius to which his work bears witness." [1]

There has been a steadily cumulative interest in the Nobel prizes, during the last twenty-five years. Proof is found by comparing journals of 1901 and 1925, with reference to data and discussion of prize winners of the respective years. That the will of Alfred Nobel was an epochal document, in the history of science and literature, was a slowly recognized truth. What is idealism in literature? What writers will be candidates with books "of idealistic tendency"? How important will be the influence of such awards? Such were queries in many minds. The meaning of idealism is elastic in interpretation, as examples among the winners will testify. A general principle holds, however, in past and present standards—the idealistic

[1] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1901.

writer sees *beyond* nature and externals; he sees "with the eye of the spirit." The difference has been expressed in fitting analogy, by contrast between a photograph and a portrait of the same individual—if the latter is painted by an intuitive artist, with vision and insight, as well as artistic technic.

René François Armand Sully-Prudhomme, the first author to win the prize in literature, in 1901, received adulatory comments from French journals and several pages of *personalia* and criticism in literary magazines of England, Germany, Scandinavia, and America. For more than forty years he had been recognized as one of the greatest living poets, the philosophical poet of the nineteenth century in France, about whose life and work there was inadequate information in English translations; the inadequacy is still apparent. The French Academy was happy that one of its members should have been chosen for this honor, the first on the list of international candidates. Born in Paris, May 16, 1839, this French poet evidently belonged to the nineteenth century, in its middle and later decades, rather than to the twentieth century and its productive or prophetic writers.

In the poetry of Sully-Prudhomme are found, almost always, two elements sometimes in conflict, wistful tenderness and serious, challenging reflection. This combination of traits may be explained, in part,

by the circumstances of his inheritance and childhood. For ten years his mother had waited to marry her lover, the father of the poet; four years after their marriage, he died. Devoted to her son and believing that he had marked skill in science, she gave him every possible chance for education; but his home life was lacking in gayety or lighter interests. At the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris, René Sully-Prudhomme excelled in mathematical sciences and his future seemed assured as a scholar and teacher. Then an illness affected his eyes so seriously that he had to abandon concentrated study and he began to write poems of philosophic trend, questioning the meaning of life yet vibrating with emotion.

The first collection of his poems, *Stances et poèmes,* appeared when he was twenty-six years old. It was received with encomiums from critics and sold so well that he determined to relinquish the hope of ever becoming either a scientist or a lawyer and decided that he would devote his time to poetry. In this collection is found "Le vase brisé," one of the most familiar of his poems, with the extended analogy between the broken vase, the verbena, and the heart; here is the echoing refrain,

Il est brisé, n'y touchez pas.

The next year *Les Epreuves,* translated as *The Test,*

was published, followed by *Les Solitudes* three years later, and *Les vrais tendresses,* in 1875. In these poetic meditations he showed the conflict, ever present in his own nature, between the reason and the emotions,

> le combat sans vainqueur
> Entre la foi sans preuve et la raison sans charme.

Even more pronounced was this motif of disharmony in the two later poems, *La Justice* and *Le Bonheur.* By his countrymen he was hailed as successor to Victor Hugo and was elected to membership in the French Academy in 1881. In the long and best known poem by Sully-Prudhomme, *La Justice,* there are strong traces of the influence of Lucretius, the classic poet whom he admired and translated with felicitous skill. A Prologue and an Epilogue and eleven "Vigils" comprise the structure of this poetic search for the element of *Justice.* There are two divisions; Part I is entitled "Silence au cœur," rendered into English as "Heart, Be Silent!" and Part II, "Appel au cœur." The chosen medium of expression is dialogue between two symbolic characters, "The Seeker," who analyzes all things with metaphysical exactness, and "A Voice" which proclaims the "divine aspect in all things." Justice cannot be located in the Universe; it may be found in the heart of man, "which is its inviolable and sacred temple."

As *La Justice* exemplified the search for Justice in Universal Nature, so *Le Bonheur,* the second long poem published in 1888, was a symbolic epic, a progress towards supreme Happiness by three routes—curiosity, sensuousness and science, virtue and sacrifice. The three Parts have been called, in one translation, "Intoxication," "Thought," "The Supreme Flight" ("Le suprème essor"). There are lines that are strained in effect, far less convincing and harmonious than the arguments in *La Justice;* by contrast there are passages of poetic beauty. Faustus and Stella are the two seekers after Happiness. In a climax—which might be more dramatic—they "take flight" spiritually from the temptations and disillusionments of earth to seek, in sacrifice, their fruition of possible happiness.

One of the colleagues of Sully-Prudhomme, who has written frankly of his personality and poetry, is Anatole France. In the biography of the latter, *Anatole France: the Man and His Work* by James Lewis May,[2] among the vignettes written of the group of poet-friends who discussed life and literature, is a typical sketch of Sully-Prudhomme, at the age of thirty-six, "mathematical and even geometrical in his sonnets." He stressed his intellectuality, as well as his handsome face and wealth. More illumining, and far more

[2] London and New York, 1924.

sympathetic, is the analytic study of Sully-Prudhomme, in the chapter entitled "Three Poets" in Anatole France's critiques *On Life and Letters,* first series, translated by A. W. Evans.[3] Comparing Sully-Prudhomme, François Coppée and Frédéric Plessis, the critic finds in the first poet, "in his favour, not only the mysterious gifts of the poet but, in addition, an absolute sincerity, an inflexible gentleness, a pity without weakness, and a candour, a simplicity that lift his philosophical scepticism, as it were on wings, into the lofty regions whither formerly the mystics were exalted by faith." As a friend and confidant, he extols this man of gentle melancholy, sentimental yet reflective, romantic yet philosophical.

Edward Dowden, in his essay on "Some French Writers of Verse,"[4] attributes the seeming unhappiness, or melancholy of Sully-Prudhomme, reflected in some of his poetry, to the lack of a creed or a loyalty to which he can give absolute devotion. He calls him "an eclectic" and finds an analogy in the tale of *Merlin,* the poetical romance by Edgar Quinet. He stresses the almost feminine sensitiveness of this poet, a woman's tenderness which in no way diminishes his manly vigor. An individual of "harder or

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[3] London and New York, 1922, pp. 133–144. By permission of Dodd, Mead & Co.

[4] *Studies in Literature,* London, 1892.

narrower personality" would not have been so disturbed by the conflicts between reason and emotion, by the deterrents to perfect happiness. Ill health for many years was a contributory factor, doubtless, to many moods of introspective sadness. He suffered from partial paralysis in later years. Francis Grierson in *Parisian Portraits* [5] gives a graphic, intimate picture of this "typical Academician" with grace of manners and intuitive insight into people, waging war against his illusions with the part of his mind that was scientific, and maintaining his poetic vision by his sensitive emotions. At his home in the rue de Faubourg he always welcomed younger poets. He seldom went into society, although he was often found at the salons of Countess Diane de Beausacq, the author of *Maximes de la vie*. This woman of independent spirit and beautiful hair, who was dressed in tones of lavender, was an inspiration to the poet. Together they discussed philosophy and art; Sully-Prudhomme emphasized "the aristocracy of the mind," the eternal quality of poetry, music, taste, and judgment.

After the Franco-Prussian War, which was a great strain upon the physical and spiritual endurance of the poet, Sully-Prudhomme wrote *Impressions* that awakened political discussion and revealed his pervasive

[5] London, 1913, pp. 66–81.

idealism. *Essays upon the Fine Arts, The Art of Versification* and *Le testament poétique* were expressions of his poetic studies and theories. On the other hand, *Que sais-je?* which appeared in 1895 was another index to his scientific inquiries into natural science, philosophy, and metaphysics. A commentator upon these queries, well entitled *What Do I Know?,* has said that his last words might be summarized as "peut-être." Doubts, yet never bitterness of despair, characterize his speculative poetry. Four years after he received the Nobel prize and two years before his death, at the age of sixty-six, he wrote *La vraie religion selon Pascal,* a last record of his profound search for spiritual values in life and literature.

Several of the shorter poems by Sully-Prudhomme, chosen from the five volumes of his verse, have been translated into English by such poets as Arthur O'Shaughnessy, E. and R. Prothero, and Dorothy Frances Guiney. These metrical interpretations are found in anthologies of French poetry by H. Carrington and Albert Boni. The latter has included a few of the most representative and musical of Sully-Prudhomme's poems in *The Modern Book of French Verse.* A wistful love poem is here entitled "A Supplication," translated by I. O. L.:[6]

[6] *The Modern Book of French Verse,* edited by Albert Boni, New York, 1920. By permission of Boni & Liveright.

Oh! did you know how the tears apace
Fall by a lonely heart, alas!
I think that before my dwelling place
Sometimes you did pass.

And did you know of the hopes that arise
In wearied soul from a pure young glance,
Maybe to my window you'd lift your eyes
As if by chance. . . .

* * * * * *

But if you knew of the love that enwraps
My soul for you, and holds it fast,
Quite simple over my threshold, perhaps,
You'd step at last.

More typical of this scientist-poet is the verse-picture entitled "The Appointment," translated by Arthur O'Shaughnessy.[7]

'Tis late; the astronomer in his lonely height,
Exploring all the dark, descries afar
Orbs that like distant isles of splendor are,
And mornings whitening in the infinite.

Like winnowed grain the worlds go by in flight,
Or swarm in glistening spaces nebular;
He summons one disheveled wandering star,—
Return ten centuries hence on such a night.

The star will come. It dare not by one hour
Cheat Science, or falsify her calculation;
Men will have passed, but watchful in the tower
Man shall remain in sleepless contemplation;

[7] *Ibid.*

And should all men have perished there in turn,
Truth in their place would watch that star's return.

Not all of the verses by Sully-Prudhomme are as pictorial as these selections. There is an unevenness more than usual in his meditative stanzas. While his popularity waned with the years and new rivals, he was long the honored bard of France, with name linked with that of Victor Hugo in his meditative poetry. The Nobel prize stimulated new interest among world readers; more translations and critical estimates appeared—and are still being issued. Maurice Baring in a recent book of criticism, *Punch and Judy and Other Essays,* has written words of succinct analysis of this French poet: he distinguishes him as "a poet who thinks and not a thinker who merely uses poetry for recreation." He adds, of his simple yet fastidious form, "Other poets have had a more glowing imagination; his verse is neither exuberant in colour nor rich in sonorous combinations of sound. The grace of his verse is one of outline and not of colour; his compositions are distinguished by his subtle rhythm; his verse is as if carved in ivory, his music is like that of a unison of stringed instruments." [8]

[8] *Punch and Judy and Other Essays* by Maurice Baring, New York, 1924, pp. 216–219. By permission of Doubleday, Page & Co.

Frédéric Mistral

Poet of Provence

The prize of 1904 has been awarded, one half to:

Mistral, Frédéric, born 1830, died March 25, 1914: "for reason of the fresh originality, rich genius, and true artistry in his poetry that faithfully mirrors the nature and life of the people of his native country; and also with respect to his significant activity as Provençal philologist." [9]

Three years after the first Nobel prize in literature had been awarded to Sully-Prudhomme, it came again to a writer who is ranked among French authors, although he is distinctively of Provence, Frédéric Mistral. This poet of *Mireio,* a pastoral epic, if one may use the term, and the preserver of the Provençal language from literary oblivion, shared the financial award and the honor for 1904 with Echegaray, the Spanish dramatist, who is discussed in another chapter of this book. Mistral was seventy-four years old when this recognition came to him; he lived for ten years longer, wielding influence upon world literature and receiving reverential homage in his own Provence. His home in later years was in the same quiet town of Maillane, in the Bouches-du-Rhône where he was born in 1830.

His father was a wealthy farmer who had aspira-

[9] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1904.

tions to make his son a lawyer. The boy was sent to school at Avignon and, later, took his degree at Nîmes University and studied at Aix. One of the teachers at Avignon was Joseph Roumanille who had a large share in restoring interest in the language. He compiled a fixed orthography of the Provençal forms and revived racial sentiment in the schools. Like his pupil, Mistral, he was a firm advocate of classic poetry. Twenty years before, a famous barber, Jacques Jasmin of Agèn, had recited troubadour songs throughout the villages and had preserved, by voice, many native legends and folk ballads. It is said that he gave his receipts in money to charity and that, within a few years, he had gathered $300,000. The school-teacher formed a society of young men at Avignon, including "seven poets and dreamers," among whom were numbered Roumanille, Mistral, Aubaniel, Mathieu, and Brunet. They pledged allegiance to Poetry, Love, and Provence. There has been general acceptance of the statement that Mistral gave to this group of poets the name of Félibres, originally called "The Seven Félibres" or Scribes of the Law. They agreed to write in their native language of Provence, to extend its knowledge and use, so that it might be more than a dialect. They maintained that it was similar to that of the medieval troubadours, that it came from the language of Rome and thus was

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FRÉDÉRIC MISTRAL

the parent tongue of Italy, France, and Spain. Although some of these statements have been seriously questioned by orthographers, the enthusiasm of these Félibres was acclaimed and literary masterpieces followed; the celebrations of the Félibres are still noteworthy festivals.

Another story is that Mistral, who was very fond of his mother, began to write his verses in French and brought them to her, assured of her encouragement and praise. Alas! his mother could not read French, although she was confident that her son was a poet of rare genius. "Let us sing in the language of our mother!" was the determination of the youth. He collected legends, folk-tales, and romantic episodes from every possible source near his home in Provence. In 1858 was published the first edition of *Mireio,* the pastoral epic which has held its literary rank, with increasing appreciation, for more than sixty years. Roumanille was sponsor for this work; the next year a French translation was made by Mistral and the book amazed Parisians by its poetic charm. It was dedicated to Lamartine. Mistral was compared, by enthusiastic critics, to Vergil, Theocritus, and Ariosto.

Into the twelve Cantos of his poem Mistral wove many local customs and personal memories. The *mas,* or farmstead, was modeled from his own home and Ramoun, the wealthy *mas*-dweller, had many

traits of his own father. Familiar to him from boyhood had been the festivals and daily tasks here portrayed—the wheat-threshing, the snail-gathering, the fireside meals, the dance of the farandole on the eve of harvest day. In outline it is a simple, somewhat conventional theme. Mireio, daughter of a "farmer-prince," loved the son of a poor basket-weaver; their romance had days of joy and nights of deep sorrow; the epical climax of the death of Mireio at the Church of the Holy Maries is relieved of its grim tragedy by the words of hope on the lips of the dying heroine.

There is a gayety of spirit, a zest of life in the opening lines of Invocation, the poet's promise to tell the life story of this lovely girl of fifteen and her innocent, ardent passion:

I sing the love of a Provençal maid;
How through the wheat-fields of La Crau she strayed
Following the fate that drew her to the sea.
Unknown beyond remote La Crau was she;
And I, who tell the rustic tale of her,
Would fain be Homer's humble follower.

What though youth's aureole was her only crown?
And never gold she wore, nor damask gown?
I'll build her up a throne out of my song,
And hail her queen in our despis'd tongue.
Mine be the simple speech that ye all know,
Shepherds and farmer-folk of lone La Crau.

The romantic episodes are told in the cantos, "The Suitors," "The Battle," "The Witch," "The Saints," "Death." Graphic pictures of local customs and setting are suggested by the subtitles "Lotus Farm," "Leaf-Picking," "The Cocooning," and "the Camargue" (or salty marshes of the Rhône). Exquisite songs are interspersed like this in Canto III, "The Cocooning":

If thou the moon wilt be,
Sailing in glory,
I'll be the halo white
Hovering every night
Around and o'er thee.

If thou become a flower,
Before thou thinkest,
I'll be a streamlet clear,
And all the waters bear
That thou, love, drinkest.

Mireio was made familiar to American readers of the last generation by the translation of Harriet Waters Preston (Boston, 1872). Several excerpts from her verse-interpretations of this and Mistral's later poems are to be found in *Library of the World's Best Literature,* edited by Charles Dudley Warner; an excellent sketch of the poet is found here. With unique, virile words George Meredith has rendered

into verse some stanzas from Canto X, "The Mares of Camargue": [10]

> A hundred mares, all white! their manes
> Like mace-reed of the marshy plains
> Thick-tufted, wavy, free o' the shears:
> And when the fiery squadron rears
> Bursting at speed, each mane appears
> Even as the white scarf of a fay
> Floating upon their necks along the heavens away.

When the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *Mireio* was celebrated at Arles, Calvé sang the "Song of Magali" and noted French actors and opera artists rendered Gounod's *Mireille,* which is based upon Mistral's pastoral. The most dramatic canto is the eighth, the flight of the heroine across the rocky plains of La Crau, finding shelter at the shrine of the Holy Maries. The maiden's prayer for help in her hour of need, for understanding of her love for her "handsome Vincen," is wistful and appealing. Two cantos have been devoted to revival of these old legends of the Holy Maries. Disciples of Jesus, driven from Palestine after his crucifixion, according to tradition, were set afloat in a barque by their persecutors. They had neither sail nor oars. They were washed ashore on the sacred soil where now stands the

[10] *Poems* by George Meredith, New York, 1897, 1898. By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, and the heirs of George Meredith.

village of Les Saintes Maries. Among these disciples were Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, their servant Sarah (who was the patron saint of gypsies), Mary Magdalene, Joseph of Arimathea, and Trophine, one of the oldest and wisest of the disciples who converted to Christianity the town of Arles.

Two long narrative poems followed *Mireio—Calendau* and *Nerto*. The former, published in 1867, is more potent in dramatic skill than the earlier pastoral. It has lines of emotional intensity, when the heroine, a Princess who lost her rank because of love for a humble suitor, inspires him by her fine spirit and tales of prowess and chivalry. "The Scaling of Ventour" is a dramatic episode in this poem. Two stanzas, translated by Harriet Waters Preston, indicate the action and colorful quality; this is a description of "the catch":[11]

Yet had we brave and splendid sport, I ween,
For some with tridents, some with lances keen,
Fell on the prey. And some were skilled to fling
A winged dart held by a slender string.
The wounded wretches, 'neath the wave withdrew,
Trailing red lines along the mirror blue.

Slowly the net brimful of treasures mounted;
Silver was there, turquoise and gold uncounted,
Rubies and emeralds million-rayed. The men

[11] By permission of the Atlantic Monthly Co.

Flung them thereon like eager children when
They stay their mother's footsteps to explore
Her apron bursting with its summer store
Of apricots and cherries.

There is less atmosphere in *Nerto,* an epic tale of the last days of the Popes at Avignon and "the miraculous burial-place,"

The Aliscamp of history
Far below Arles.

The legend of this spot is one of the best portions of *Nerto:*

out of the heaven came,
Our Lord himself to bless the spot,
And left, if the tale erreth not
The impress of his bended knee,
Rock-graven. Howso this may be,
Full oft a swarm of angels white
Bends hither, on a tranquil night,
Singing celestial harmonies.[12]

Among the collections of lyrics of love and patriotism by Mistral the earlier volume in 1875, entitled *Les Isles d'Or,* contained songs in many moods. Lamartine listened to recital of these and other verses "in the sweet nervous idiom of Provence, which combines the Latin pronunciation with the grace of Attica and the

[12] Translated by Harriet Waters Preston. By permission of Atlantic Monthly Co.

serenity of Tuscany." He adds, "The verses of Mistral were liquid and melodious, they pleased without intoxicating me." [13] The later collection, issued in 1912, was entitled *Les Olivades.* Mistral thus explained the title: "The days that grow chill and the swelling seas—all things tell me that the winter of my life has come, and that I must without delay gather *my* olives and offer the virgin-oil on the altar of God." At this time the poet was eighty-two years old. He had written an autobiography, *Mes origines,* with reminiscences of his youth, which was translated as *Memoirs of Mistral* by Constance Elisabeth Maud; the lyrics of Provence were rendered into English here by Alma Strettell (Mrs. Lawrence Harrison).

Few writers have had more intensive love of country than Mistral. He refused the offer of a chair in the French Academy because it would necessitate leaving Provence; he was given prizes by the Academy and badges of the Legion. Late in mature years he married a beautiful young woman of Arlesian family; she has been crowned Queen of the Félibres, in a yearly festival of contests and songs. Towards the close of the nineteenth century Mistral began collecting specimens of Provençal flowers, rocks, and archeological relics for a museum at Arles; he called this his "last poem." In a typical *mas,* or farmstead,

[13] *Cours familier de littérature.*

he placed these collections and equipment of varied kinds, showing the customs of the land. He represented, also, certain feasts and traditions by wax figures. Among others, here is the Arlesian legend of the feast of Noël and the visit of three women to a mother and her first-born; one brings a match that the child's body may be straight, another brings an egg, that his life may be full, and a third brings salt, symbol of wisdom.[14] A large part of the Nobel prize money was used by Mistral for the housing and equipment of this Museum.

Alphonse Daudet, like Mistral, is a native of Provence. The natives admire the literary grace and wit of the former, "even if he may laugh at us occasionally," they say, but they *love* Mistral. For ten years the latter worked upon his *Comprehensive Lexicon of Ancient and Modern Provençal,* which was published in two large volumes in 1886. He was honored by the educated classes and loved by the peasantry, landowners, and boatmen of the Rhône. In 1897 he incorporated into his narrative in verse, *Le poème du Rhône,* many customs and songs of the days before steamships had increased the speed of travel and reduced its picturesqueness. In twelve cantos he celebrated this famous river and its border

[14] "Frédéric Mistral: Poet of the Soil" by Vernon Loggins, *Sewanee Review,* March, 1924.

towns. A dramatic scene recalled the flight of Napoleon across the border from Russia. As poetic art this poem is inferior to *Mireio* or *Calendau;* it lacks spontaneity yet it has musical measures.

Poet of the soil was Mistral, akin in his simplicity and loyalty to Burns and Whittier, although more of a scholar and technician than either of these writers of verse. Like them, however, he created anew the life of his rural people; he touched daily incidents with poetic beauty. He received many distinguished visitors from every country in his later years and treasured letters from scholars of every land. Among the latter was a letter from Theodore Roosevelt written when he was President and had received a copy of a new edition of *Mireio;* to the poet he acknowledged his indebtedness of many years for the delights that he had found in this wistful love poem of Provence, which mirrored so perfectly the traditions and life of the people.

CHAPTER III

TWO GERMAN SCHOLARS: THEODOR MOMMSEN—RUDOLF EUCKEN

The prize of 1902 has been awarded:

Mommsen, Theodor, Professor of History at the University of Berlin, born 1817, died November 1, 1903: "the greatest living master of the age in the art of representing history, taking into especial regard his monumental work, *Römische Geschichte.*" [1]

France was the first country to be honored by the Nobel prize in literature; Germany was the second. In 1902, Theodor Mommsen, whose records of scholarship included history, law and archeology, was the chosen candidate. He was eighty-four years old and lived for only a year after the award. While there was gratification among his countrymen and friends in other lands, at his recognition and this high honor, yet there were adverse comments in several journals about the perversion of the intent of Nobel's will. The recipient had finished his work; the award could never quicken him to further research or expression of idealism. This choice showed the intention

[1] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1902.

of the Swedish Academy to consider "literature" in a broad sense, including contributions of scientific value as well as those of artistic merit.

Garding, in Schleswig, was the birthplace of Mommsen; his school days were spent at Kiel. Before he was thirty years old he had been employed by the Berlin Academy to decipher and examine Roman inscriptions in Italy and France, because of marked accuracy and zest in research. He combined the reading of law with that of history and, in 1848, was called to the department of law at Leipzig University. Always fearless in political convictions and ardent in Liberalism, he was obliged to retire from this University because of active participation in the political issues of 1848–1849. Two years later he was called to professorship of Roman law at Zürich; after service here for two years he accepted a similar position at Breslau. In all these places he was recognized as magnetic in the classroom and inspirational in his contact with University students from all parts of the civilized world. In 1858, he went to the University of Berlin as Professor of Ancient History and there extended his influence among scholars and lay readers.

Although specific in his interests and a student of deep earnestness, he had read and traveled widely; as conversationalist he excelled, informed upon topics

in almost every branch of learning and activity. To him has been attributed the oft quoted sentence, "Each student must choose his special field of labour but he must not imprison himself within its confines." [2] He was called "the modern Erasmus" because of his versatile knowledge. He wrote with facility and grace, as well as vigor, whether his theme was a monumental *History of Rome,* or a journalistic discussion of current affairs. In political creed he belonged to the National Liberal Party. He was, however, never partisan in his ultimate purposes and hopes for future union of factions. He opposed Bismarck in his tenets and sometimes won over him in courts of law and in the Prussian House of Delegates, by his keen, logical mind. At the same time, he admired the Chancellor very much and said, "What a calamity it is for us all that political animosity should deprive us of the privilege of mixing socially with such a man!" On principle, he was opposed to British attitude towards the Boers, and gave his allegiance to the revolutionists. Again, he deplored the strained relations at times between his country and England and asserted, "What a pity that two great nations of kindred race should remain at loggerheads!" [3] He de-

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[2] *Bookman,* 18: 346.

[3] *Ibid.* 346–348, December, 1903, article on Mommsen. By permission of the Editor of *The Bookman.*

tested slavery and considered the Civil War in the United States "a holy crusade." [4]

More than one hundred volumes of original writing and translations from the Latin and Germanic languages are listed under Mommsen's name in large German libraries. Edward A. Freeman, a critic and historian of international repute, has called Mommsen "the greatest scholar of our times, well-nigh the greatest scholar of all times." His writings show mastery of law, languages, customs, archeology, coins, inscriptions and monuments, that are of inestimable value to students. He was editor of *Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum* which was issued by the Berlin Academy of which he was secretary for many years. To the average reader, however, the name of Theodor Mommsen will always be associated with his *History of Rome,* written 1854–1856, which still maintains its authenticity and popularity. As a writer, Mommsen was always illumining, with a vivid style; he was often dramatic. He touched descriptive scenes with grace and color but he was convincingly realistic in his portrayal of events and characters. He unfolded a large canvas but he kept a true focus and threw a strong light upon both individuals and group-pictures, from the early days of Rome to the death of Julius Cæsar.

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[4] *Some Eighteenth Century Byways and Other Essays* by John Buchan, Edinburgh and London, 1908, William Blackwood & Sons.

Although his masterwork was entitled *History of Rome,* he explained, in the Introductory Chapter, that he intended "to relate the history of Italy, not simply the record of the city of Rome." While the Romans represented the most powerful branch of the Italian stock, yet they were only a branch—but this civic community of Rome gained sovereignty over Italy and the world of its day. Like the historian Freeman, Mommsen insisted upon "the unity of history," the similarity of human nature from 1800 B. C. to modern times. Few writers have surpassed him in revivifying historical characters. He had strong likes and dislikes, prejudices which he could impress upon the reader, although he was generally justified in his statements and balanced in his estimates. The portrait of Cicero, which "was bitten with vitriolic energy," as Mr. Buchan has said, in *Some Eighteenth Century Byways and Other Essays,* has been most widely quoted; it is less impartial than his characterizations of Hannibal, Sully, and Cæsar. By temperament and political bias, Mommsen was an admirer of Julius Cæsar; he has given to him a living portraiture.

The pictorial Chapter IV in Book III, descriptive of Hannibal's Passage of the Alps, is a world-famous extract from this *History of Rome.* In the same chapter is the analysis of Hannibal's character, so often quoted: "He was primarily marked by that

inventive craftiness, which forms one of the leading traits of the Phœnician character; he was fond of taking singular and unexpected routes: ambushes and stratagems of all sorts were familiar to him; he studied the character of his antagonists with unprecedented care. . . . The power which he wielded over men is shown by his incomparable control over an army of various natives and many tongues. . . . He was a great man; wherever he went, he riveted the eyes of all." [5]

There is history of dramatic incident, written with pictorial skill, in such passages as the Battle of Cannæ, the story of the Gracchi, and the Crossing of the Rubicon. The breadth of Mommsen's interests are suggested by such later chapters as those on Roman Religion, Manners, and Literature and Art. While he was deeply interested in the past, and informed about its aspects and personalities, he was alert in all movements of the present and their trends. He looked to the future with prevision and optimism. In the Introductory Chapter to his famous *History of Rome* he contrasts modern history with past cycles of culture which will be repeated and adds: "And yet this goal will only be temporary: the grandest system of civili-

[5] *History of Rome* by Theodor Mommsen, translated by William P. Dickson, New York, 1908, Vol. II, pp. 244, 245. By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

zation has its orbit, and may complete its course; but not so the human race, to which, just when it seems to have reached its goal, the old task is ever set anew, with a wider range and with a deeper meaning." [6] In spirit, Mommsen was entitled to rank as an idealist, a worker "to benefit mankind." In literary achievements he richly deserved the Nobel prize; his researches had enriched human knowledge beyond those of other scholars; his writings appealed to the reader of ordinary mentality as well as to the more intellectual; his vision and faith in human progress were undimmed.

Rudolf Eucken

German Philosopher

The prize of 1908 has been awarded:

Eucken, Rudolf, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Jena, born 1846: "because of the sincerity of his search for truth, the penetrating power of thought, the clarity of vision, the warmth and force of interpretation with which he has, in his numerous works, cultivated and developed an ideal world philosophy." [7]

In 1908, six years after the Nobel prize came to Mommsen, it was again awarded to a German scholar, Rudolf Eucken. By translation and lectures in

[6] By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

[7] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1908.

countries other than his own, this recipient was no stranger to readers of current literature. Born in 1846, in Aurich, East Friesland, Eucken was younger than the majority of the earlier winners; he accomplished much writing and lecturing after the honor had been given. His mature life was devoted to a struggle against the materialistic philosophy of his day. He was a worthy winner of a prize for "the most distinguished work of an idealistic tendency" in his country. His incessant purpose was expressed in his autobiography: "My reminiscences tell about all of the struggle to prevent the externalization of life. This externalization is not, it is true, the defect or fault of one particular nation; it is found in every nation and a radical change is needed in each. . . . Every man who shares the conviction that a spiritual reformation is needed will follow with a kindly sympathy the modest efforts which are recorded in my reminiscences." [8]

His native province, East Friesland, is an agricultural and trading region in Germany, near Holland, with occasional fisheries as industry. His birth town, Aurich, is the commercial and social center. The boy's childhood was somewhat sad; he was the

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[8] *Rudolf Eucken: His Life, Work and Travels* by himself, translated by Joseph McCabe, New York, 1922. By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

first child born to his parents after ten years of marriage, and his father died when the lad was five years old. He had a series of misfortunes in his infancy and youth: his throat was badly torn in the effort to extricate a curtain-fastener which he nearly swallowed as a baby; he had scarlet fever and wrong treatment, so that he was threatened with blindness for a time but recovered; a younger brother's death added to the family gloom.

Rudolf Eucken inherited studious inclinations. His father, spending his days in the postal service, was a fine mathematician. His mother (daughter of a clergyman who was a leader of Radicalism) was well-read in science and ambitious for her son; the latter records that she was, also, a practical housewife. After the father's death their finances were low and the mother took lodgers to add to her income. She was determined that Rudolf should be well educated, that he should become a philosopher or scientist. He recalls his debt to her in his reminiscences. At the gymnasium at Aurich he showed interest in mathematics and in music. A strong influence of those plastic days was his teacher, Reuter, who was forced to retire by the bureaucracy because of his liberalism. Other professors who left traces upon his development were Letze and Teichmüller. For a time he was at the University of Berlin. After experimental teach-

ing he was called to Basel as professor of philosophy. His mother went with him but their plans for happy years together were shattered by her death.

Basel was at this time a small University with about one hundred and fifty students; Eucken came into close contact with these in the classroom and outside activities. Already he had begun to write studies upon philosophers of classic days, Aristotle and others. In 1873 he accepted a call to Jena University where he was brought into comradeship with such brilliant associates as Kuno Fischer, Haeckel and Hildebrand. The issue, in 1878, of Eucken's book, *Fundamental Ideas of the Present Day* (or *The Fundamental Concepts of Modern Philosophic Thought*) aroused sudden interest among scholars of every country in this daring, idealistic philosopher of Jena University. The basic idea was to emphasize the harmonious relations of history and criticism. At the request of President Noah Porter of Yale University, a translation of this book into English was made by Professor M. Stuart Phelps; thus American readers became acquainted with this German scholar who was to enter later into friendly contact with academic organizations here.

By his marriage, in 1882, to Irene Passow, Eucken increased his prestige among intellectual and social leaders. He says that his wife "was not one of the

learned women," but that she had intellectual interests, gifts in art, and fine administrative ability. Her mother was the daughter of the noted archeologist, Ulrich, born in Athens; thus Eucken's circle of friends widened among scientists and historians. He continued to write books with cumulative power, like *The Life of the Spirit, Contributions to the History of Modern Philosophy, The Problem of Human Life as Viewed by the Great Thinkers, Life's Basis and Life's Ideals, Christianity and the New Idealism.*[9] Many of his own countrymen, who were materialistic philosophers or monistic evolutionists, criticized Eucken severely; he declared the German press "ignored him." He popularized religious philosophy, especially under such titles as *The Truth of Religion,* and *Can We Still Be Christians?* He was invited to deliver lectures in Holland, France, England, and America.

Some of these later books followed the award of the Nobel prize in 1908. He was called "the winning dark horse of that year"; he said that the honor came as "a great surprise" to him. As further recognition he was made a member of the Swedish Academy of Sciences. The comments in the German press were noticeably restrained beside the enthusiastic tributes in France, Holland, and England. In 1911 he went to England and, later, to America as academic lec-

[9] For further titles, see bibliography and list of translators.

turer; he was "exchange professor" and gave lectures at Harvard University, Columbia University, the Lowell Institute at Boston, and Smith College. His wife and daughter came with him to America and were guests in the homes of Professors Moore and Münsterburg at Cambridge. The reader of his Reminiscences will smile at some of the comments upon Americans and his reception here. In Germany, with the arrival of "an exchange professor" and his first lecture, there is a demonstration of welcome, with formal program and the presence of notables in statescraft as well as letters. He found no such condition at Harvard University. He presented himself to President Lowell and was told, "You may begin at once." [10] By contrast he says, with naïveté, President Butler of Columbia University gave a banquet in honor of Eucken and Bergson, who were lecturing in New York at the same time.

Among Americans whom the German scholar met with friendly contact were Andrew Carnegie and Roosevelt. He says of the latter, "With Roosevelt I had a very spirited conversation on American idealism and its future, in which he gave proof of considerable historical knowledge." [11] He found Americans,

[10] *Rudolf Eucken: His Life, Work and Travels* by himself, translated by Joseph McCabe, New York, 1922, p. 162. By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 167.

as a class, alert but not well informed on European affairs, especially German history. After he returned from America, he planned a trip to Japan and China, hoping to carry into the Orient his principles of idealistic philosophy; he sought coöperation of all nations in "solving problems of life." The war interfered with this project and caused him deep depression. He tried in every way to appeal to the less materialistic traits of his people. In 1915, he wrote *The Bearers of German Idealism*, a book which sold copies by the tens of thousands and supplemented, in a way, his earlier volume, *The Historical Significance of the German People.* He found the war "the saddest moment in German history"; he felt the nations were disloyal to themselves and sentiments of honor. His daughter, a musician of rare gifts, lost her lover during the war. In his sons, one a physician and another a political economist, Eucken saw examples of many of his idealistic influences.

The writings of Eucken, especially those of religious trend, have been popular in America, as well as England. Several of his essays have been collected and translated by Meyrick Booth. In the *Harper's Library of Living Thought* is the translation by Lucy Judge Gibson and W. R. Boyce Gibson of his *Christianity and the New Idealism* (1909 and 1912). *The Meaning and Value of Life* had one of the same trans-

lators; Joseph McCabe, who translated the autobiography, has rendered, also, *Socialism: an Analysis* (1922). Among other books in constant demand at libraries are *Religion and Life,* the lectures which he gave in London, Oxford, and elsewhere, 1911, and *Ethics and Modern Thought: a Theory of their Relations,* which were the Deems lectures, delivered in 1913 at New York University. These are translated by Margaret von Seydewitz from the German manuscript. *Can We Still Be Christians?* with its challenging title (1914) is a careful, tolerant study of historic Christianity, an advocacy of a religion which will adapt itself to the demands of daily life. Spirituality and morality must combine to form a high level of progress and the Church must become "a repository of the facts and tasks of life itself."

Comparisons have often been made between Eucken and two other modern thinkers and writers on philosophy of kindred motive—Adolf Harnack and Henri Bergson. The former, who has been professor at Leipzig and Berlin, author of such stirring books as *What Is Christianity?* and *History of Dogma,* has the German background while Bergson, in his *Creative Philosophy* has written an epoch-making book with dissimilar but potent deductions. The two men, Eucken and Bergson, have been discussed in a discriminating essay by E. Hermann who thus summarizes

the message of the Nobel prize winner in philosophy: "Eucken stands before us today as perhaps the greatest thinker of our age and the protagonist of a new idealism which satisfies our demands for moral reality as no idealistic philosophy has ever done, and as the teacher who has most fully and boldly developed the religious implications of ethical idealism. His philosophy of life is an insistence upon the supremacy of the spiritual. His defence of freedom is a doctrine of spiritual liberty rooted in the saving initiative of God and our dependence on Him. His vindication of our personality is the rescue of the free, God-centered personality from the thralldom of a self-centered individuality." [12]

Especially interesting is the Nobel Lecture, delivered at Stockholm, March 27, 1909, by Eucken, translated by Alban G. Widgery, Cambridge, 1912 (W. Heffer and Sons). As an introductory thought, Eucken emphasizes that we are living in an age when tradition has become a subject of doubt and new ideas are struggling to guide our lives. The two terms, "*Naturalism or Idealism,*" which form the title of this Nobel address, have become confused in meaning and have caused misunderstandings. To Eucken, Naturalism

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[12] *Eucken and Bergson: Their Significance for Christian Thought,* by E. Hermann, Boston, 1912, p. 87. By permission of The Pilgrim Press.

means "faith in man's relation to Nature"; Idealism accepts this faith but asks if this is the whole of life or if there is not another kind of life, also. He pleads for domination of "The True, the Good and the Beautiful" in life, not merely utilitarian aspects. Life is not just a reflection of a given reality but a striving upward; it does not *find* another world but "it may *produce* one." Idealism which deals with such expansion of daily life has no new aims to-day beyond that of classic times but it is emphasized, because "we have been driven beyond the standards of Naturalism." The task before literature is coöperation in this effort to reach a higher level, "to purify and confirm, to make the fundamental problems of our spiritual existence *impressive* to us, to raise life above the mere transient culture, by the realization of something eternal." This, as he interprets it, was the idea of Alfred Nobel in his will and awards; this has been the life purpose of Eucken as teacher and writer.

CHAPTER IV

BJÖRNSON: NORWEGIAN NOVELIST AND PLAYWRIGHT

The prize of 1903 has been awarded:

Björnson, Björnstjerne, born 1832, died April 26, 1910: "as a tribute acknowledging his noble, splendid and varied works of art which have always been distinguished by freshness of inspiration, and, at the same time, by unusual purity of soul." [1]

One of the five members elected by the Norwegian Storthing, to select the winners of the prize for the promotion of peace, under terms of Nobel's will, was Björnstjerne Björnson. It was a fitting choice for he was a vigorous advocate of world peace, an ardent worker in all causes for "the benefit of mankind." When the award in literature for 1903 was given to him, he was already known as "Norway's Father." As writer of novels and plays, he had been read more widely than almost any other Scandinavian of his day, at that time surpassing Ibsen in translated works. As publicist and orator, as manager of theatres and civic legislator, he exerted national influence. In giv-

[1] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1903.

By courtesy of The American-Scandinavian Foundation

BJÖRNSTERNE BJÖRNSON

ing him the Nobel prize the adjudicators had in memory, especially, his earlier tales of peasant life which intermingled poetic idealism with sagas and realistic pictures of Norwegian life. His plays of later years, *Beyond Human Power, The Editor,* and *Sigurd Slembe,* were problem plays that awakened discussion in many countries; they were more universal and realistic in tone than the earlier fiction. Björnson had a remarkable combination of virility and gentleness. He was a Viking clansman, as he often averred, but he was also a poet, loving the folk songs and pictorial delights of rugged Norway with deep, ardent affection. The symbol of his strength, represented twice in the lingual root of his name—Björn, a bear—was fitting for his large, fearless mind and spiritual energy. He was a warrior when occasion demanded resistance to evil; he was a skald when he wrote tales of peasantry.

He was born in 1832 at Kvikne, in the valley of the Dovre Mountains. He lived seven years after the Nobel prize was given to him, keeping his mentality alert until almost the end of his seventy-eight years. His father was pastor in this small place, without beauty of scenery or fertility of soil. When the boy was six years old the family moved to a region of marked contrasts, in Romsdale. His memories of this picturesque scenery and his delights in the valleys; hills,

and fjord, were commemorated in his poem, "Over the Lofty Mountains." His school days at Molde were busy and happy; he read with insatiable appetite for sagas and history, and became devoted to the Swedish poet, Wergeland. At seventeen he went to Christiania to prepare for the University. Here he was a schoolmate of Ibsen; with typical humor he wrote—and treasured—this doggerel of these early days:

> Overstrained and lean, of the colour of gypsum,
> Behind a beard, huge and black, was seen Henrik Ibsen.

The two families cemented their friendship of many years by the marriage of Björnson's daughter, Bergliot, a singer of much talent, to the son of Ibsen.

At Christiania, Björnson became much interested in Danish literature, especially drama, and he began his play, *The Newly-married Couple,* which was not finished until a decade later. He completed, however, a one-act play, *Between the Battles,* which was staged in Christiania with only moderate success. For a time he abandoned drama and devoted himself to the peasant tales, to characters of types familiar to him, against a background of Norwegian folklore. He was proud to recall that his forefathers were peasants; he knew the common people and sympathized with their customs and ambitions. He sought to blend sagas and scenes

from modern life, with mutual interpretation. Those early stories of simple life, *Arne, The Fisher Maiden, A Happy Boy,* and *Synnöve Solbakken,* were well received in Denmark and Germany, as well as his own country. Soon they were translated into English and commended for their simplicity, poetry, and national spirit. Sir Edmund Gosse, writing in the late 1880's, said of Björnson: "His spirit was as masculine as a Viking's and as pure and tender as a maiden's. Through these little romances there blows a wind as fragrant and refreshing as the odour of the Trondhjem balsam willows, blown out to sea to welcome the newcomer; and just as this rare scent is the first thing that tells the traveller of Norway, so the purity of Björnson's *novelettes* is usually the first thing to attract a foreigner to Norwegian literature." [2]

Mr. Georg Brandes, in his excellent study of Björnson in *Creative Spirits of the Nineteenth Century,* affirms that the popularity of these peasant tales was not so great throughout Norway as one is inclined to believe from later reports. "People loved the peasant in the abstract" but they did not know him, nor were they deeply interested in his welfare or his aspirations. Moreover, the critics found them sentimental and failed to appreciate the legends and

[2] *Northern Studies* by Edmund Gosse, Walter Scott, London, 1890. By permission of Sir Edmund Gosse.

parables which were often interspersed, like the beautiful symbolism in the opening paragraphs of *Arne* with the several trees—juniper, oak, birch, and heather—seeking to clothe the mountain. In the two tales, *Synnöve Solbakken* and *Arne,* Björnson represented two heroes of Norwegian life; Thorbjörn of the first story was the youth of physical virility, developed by contact with gentler influences; Arne, by contrast, was dreamy and poetic, in need of more robust experiences. There are wistful strains of melody in this story of *Arne*—this yearning for the ideal. Sir Edmund Gosse has translated one of these lyrics in rhymed couplets:

Through the forest the boy wends all day long,
For there he has heard such a wonderful song.

He carved him a flute of the willow tree,
And tried what the tune within it might be.

The tune came out of it sad and gay,
But while he listened it passed away.

He fell asleep, and once more it sung,
And over his forehead it lovingly hung.

He thought he would catch it and wildly woke,
And the tune in the frail night faded and broke.

"Oh God, my God, take me up to Thee,
For the tune Thou hast made is consuming me."

And the Lord God said, "'Tis a friend divine,
Though never one hour shalt thou hold it thine.

Yet all other music is poor and thin
By the side of this which thou never shalt win." [3]

The character of Arne, the poetic, restless boy who tries to break away from the rock-ribbed confines of Norway, is an individual and a national type; his mother, Marit, is one of the most real, appealing women of Norwegian fiction. In these two peasant tales, and the lighter, more joyful romance of *A Happy Boy,* is found some of the best poetry by Björnson. Many of these verses are found in *Poems and Songs,* translated by Arthur Hubbell Palmer from the Norwegian in the original meters. [4] "Synnöve's Song," "The Day of Sunshine," and "Ballad of Tailor Nils," from *Arne,* are typical examples of his lyrics. Included in this anthology are patriotic poems. One of these, entitled "Song of Norway," from *Synnöve Solbakken* (1859) is one of the most familiar of National Songs, beginning,

Yes, we love this land that towers
Where the ocean foams;
Rugged, stormswept, it embowers
Many thousand homes.

[3] *Ibid.,* p. 32. By permission of Sir Edmund Gosse.
[4] American-Scandinavian Foundation, 1915. By permission of translator and publisher.

Love it, love it, of you thinking,
Father, mother dear,
And that night of saga sinking
Dreamful to us here.[5]

Thirty years later, for the silver wedding anniversary of Herman Anker and his wife, Björnson wrote another poem of patriotic and idealistic strains, beginning,

Land That Shall Be!
Thither, when thwarted our longings, we sail,—
Sighs to the clouds, that we breathe when we fail,
Form a mirage of rich valley and mead
Over our need,—
Visions revealing the future until
Faith shall fulfill,—
The land that shall be![6]

Ever after a visit to Upsala University and a longer residence in Copenhagen, Björnson had cravings to write and to direct plays. In the latter position he served for a time, 1857–1859, at Bergen. His first plays were of saga heroes and chieftains, like Halvard of *Between the Battles* and *Sigurd Slembe* or *Sigurd the Bad*. They possess militant virtues and moral integrity but they are driven to misdeeds and

[5] This has been adapted to song by Nordraak; another, "Forward," has been set to music by Grieg.

[6] *Poems and Songs* by Björnstjerne Björnson, translated by Arthur Hubbell Palmer, from the Norwegian in the original meters, London 1915. By permission of the American-Scandinavian Foundation.

despair by opposition to their good intentions. Thus Sigurd seeks to make peace with his half-brother, Harold Gille, but is betrayed into revenge and murder. Mr. Brandes suggests that in these plays the spiritual sufferings of Björnson—who would elevate and harmonize the Norwegian people but finds himself misunderstood and rejected in his idealism—are revealed by analogy. He stresses the difference between Björnson and Ibsen in this respect and others; the former seeks comradeship and unity; the latter is "solitary by nature." Björnson portrays all aspects of nature; Ibsen seldom uses such descriptions. With fine distinctions between the two men, in nature and literature, Mr. Brandes writes: "Henrik Ibsen is a judge, stern as one of the judges of Israel of old; Björnson is a prophet, the delightful herald of a better age. In the depths of his nature, Ibsen is a great revolutionist. . . . Björnson's is a concilatory mind; he wages warfare without bitterness. His poetry sparkles with the sunshine of April, while that of Ibsen, with its deep earnestness, seems to lurk in dark shadows." Ibsen loved the idea; Björnson loved humanity. [7]

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, in his study of Björnson, in *Adventures in Criticism* [8] divides his writings into

[7] *Creative Spirits of the Nineteenth Century* by Georg Brandes, translated by Rasmus B. Anderson, New York, 1923, p. 345. By permission of Thomas Y. Crowell Co.

[8] London and New York, 1925. New edition.

three periods which he calls "simplicity, confusion and dire confusion." The first group of tales are those of idyllic type, already considered in *Arne* and *A Happy Boy;* the second represent a transition towards the realistic and self-conscious, exampled in *The Fisher Maiden* and *Magnhild;* the third, showing more complications of thought and style, are like *The Heritage of the Kurts* (originally entitled *Flags Are Flying*) and *In God's Way.* The influence of German and French realists may be traced in these later novels, especially the former with its portrayal of polygamous conditions. Other critics consider *Magnhild* an advance in characterization over any previous fiction by Björnson, especially in the musician Tande and the relationship between him and Magnhild. If the author intends to show that a woman may be happy in other ways than love, he does not "get the message over" until it is interpreted by Mr. Brandes or other critics. Rationalism mingles with idealism in the first scenes of *In God's Way.*

As the years passed, Björnson traveled on the continent, in England and to America for a visit in 1881. He sharpened his outlook upon life but he never lost his "passion for truth," his hatred of oppression in any form, his belief that individuals and nations might be joined by friendship rather than separated by antagonisms. He was deeply impressed by certain forms

of hypocrisy which he witnessed in Norway and he attacked such abuses in the problem plays, *The King, The Editor,* and *The Bankrupt.* Unlike the traditional patriot who says, "My country—right or wrong—but my country!" Björnson adopted as his slogan, "Norway must be right at all cost!" His plays, which revealed innate evils, made him unpopular with politicians and brought about threats of violence. He used to tell, with humor, of the visit of some aggressive opponents among the young men who threw stones at his windows but went away singing the refrain of his National Song,

Yes, we love this land that towers, etc.

As dramatist, Björnson attained a skill which is being recognized by students of to-day. *The Newly-married Couple,* which was, probably, the first play to be written in original draft but held for later publication, has a psychological theme, well constructed—the adjustment necessary between the love of a maiden for her parents and the new, strange love for her husband. The characters are vital and the lines effective. Another early play, *Lame Hulda* (*Halta Hulda*), was more emotionally intense; the heroine, lame for twenty-four years, experiences a brief, tragic passion for a man whose love is pledged elsewhere. There is lack of those elements of comedy that lighten

the lessons of *The Newly-married Couple.* To the earlier period of play writing belongs, also, *Maria Stuart in Scotland,* a brilliant retelling of the familiar romance but lacking dramatic situations at the close; Björnson was always at his best in Scandinavian background; nevertheless John Knox is a commanding personality in this play. In this time of mental conflict between the ideal and the realities in life as they affected his development, he wrote that vigorous novel, *The Fisher Maiden,* with vivid characterization, and one of his most pictorial poems, *The Young Viking.*

Truth is the demand of the dramatist, in every crisis in life, as depicted in his problem plays, from *The Bankrupt* to *A Gauntlet.* With skill he shows The King, thwarted in his high ideals and his love, trying to "serve the freedom of the spirit," to be a true "citizen-king" but ending his life in despair because of the deceit of others. *The Bankrupt* has a strong character in Berent, the lawyer; the "problem" centers about the merchant's temptation to use the money of others. *The Editor* aroused much controversy, because it was claimed that Björnson had here satirized a Swedish editor but the charge was unfounded; rather the editor and his victims, Halvadan and Harald, typify journalistic conditions in every land. Mr. Brandes suggests that the dramatist may have been modeling these two brothers from the older poet,

Wergeland and himself, in their struggles to create love for truth and freedom. In *Leonarda,* with lyrical as well as dramatic qualities, Björnson spoke a message of more tolerance and historical significance through three generations of Norwegian society. Two excellent translators of his plays have been Edwin Björkman and R. Farquharson Sharp (*see* bibliography).

By translation and inclusion in selected plays of merit from many languages, *Beyond Human Control* has become one of the most familiar of Björnson's social dramas. It is one of the chosen plays in *Chief Contemporary Dramatists,* Series I, by Thomas H. Dickinson. There are two parts to this drama, with differing *motifs*—the first in chronology and most widely read and staged is *Beyond Human Power* (or *Beyond Our Power: Over Ævne* I, 1883) dealing with problems of religious faith and fanaticism; the second part (*Over Ævne* II, 1895) treats of differences of opinion between labor and capital. The first part, a complete play, has been given throughout Europe and was performed in New York in 1902, with Mrs. Patrick Campbell in the leading rôle. The characters are strongly balanced in interest; the wife of the self-sacrificing, impractical pastor, Clara Sang, is a masterly delineation of wifely loyalty and maternal responsibility. The Bishop is well drawn in antithesis

to Pastor Sang. *A Gauntlet* created discussion in Norway because of its daring theme—the advocacy of the same standards of social purity for men and women. It is less effective dramatically but morally it is vigorous.

Björnson's later work in drama includes such good reading-plays as *Laboremus, Daglannet,* and *When the New Wine Blooms.*[9] As examples of literary work after the age of seventy, to which may be added the story, *Mary,*[10] with emotional power, they stand as testimonials to the vigor, mental and spiritual, of this worthy "Viking" of our day. After he received the Nobel prize, in accord with the proviso of the Code of Statutes, he made a noteworthy address upon the theme, "Poetry As a Manifestation of the Sense of Vital Surplus." His own vitality and zest in life never lapsed. He declared that the possession of a new pair of trousers in his old age gave him a sense of delight like that of a child and he would get up an hour earlier "to get full enjoyment of these clothes." Edwin Björkman, one of the most intuitive of his many translators, tells, in his *Voices of Tomorrow*[11] incidents in the later life of Björnson that verify his childlike nature, combined with serious, passionate efforts for hu-

[9] Translated by Lee M. Hollander, *Poet Lore,* 1911.
[10] Translated by Mary Morison, 1910.
[11] New York, 1913.

man betterment. His wife, an actress by training, was his amanuensis and critic; between husband and wife existed a rare bond of sympathy: at formal dinners, and on social occasions of varied kinds, Björnson insisted that his wife should sit at his right hand, in spite of other conventions. As writer, speaker, "lay preacher," and civic adviser, Björnson has an assured rank among "The Creative Spirits of the Nineteenth Century."

CHAPTER V

GIOSUÈ CARDUCCI—ITALIAN POET

"The prize of 1906 has been awarded:

Carducci, Giosuè, Professor in the History of Literature at the University of Bologna, born 1835, died February 16, 1907: "in consideration not only of his wide learning and critical research, but, in the first place, as homage to the plastic energy, the freshness of style, and the lyric strength that distinguish his poetry." [1]

In 1906, when he was seventy years old, Giousè Carducci, the greatest of living Italian poets of that time, for more than two score years professor at the University of Bologna, was announced the winner of the Nobel prize in literature. As in the case of Mistral, the choice had fallen upon a poet of patriotic influence, although the Italian was far more independent in spirit, with less sentimental devotion to his country. At different periods he had been a critic of both the Liberal and the Monarchial parties; sometimes he had seemed to be vacillating in his political convictions but he had always been an ardent patriot for Italy of the past, with hopes for a future of greater freedom and world influence.

[1] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1907.

Carducci was born at Val di Castello, July 27, 1835. His father, of a Florentine family, was a country doctor who had been imprisoned for political activities before the son was born. When Giosuè was three years old, the family moved to Bolgheri, in Tuscan Maremma; here the boy roamed about the hills and valleys for eleven years; he recalled some of his childhood memories in "Crossing the Tuscan Maremma." He was educated, in the first place, at home; his father taught him Latin and his mother read to him from the poems of Alfieri. After the turbulent conditions of 1848 the family moved to Florence and he was sent to the Scuole Pie; at eighteen, he was writing *Sapphics and Alcaics,* in which he urged a return to classic meters and early ideals of Italy. His vein of satire was shown in mild attacks upon the church and its restrictions upon progress. Schiller, Byron, and Scott were his favorite authors during a part of this formative period.

In 1856 he was nominated as Professor of Rhetoric at the Gymnasium of San Miniato al Tedesco but he became involved in political and literary controversies. He was refused government sanction to teach in a position offered at Arezzo, so he returned to Florence. He was poor and lived in extreme self-denial, frequenting libraries, storing his mind with Greek and Latin literature and finding some employment with

the publisher, Barbèra, for whom he wrote prefaces, notes, etc., for Italian classics. Two griefs came within a year—the suicide of his brother, Dante, and the death of his father. In memory of his brother he wrote the lines "Alla memoria di D. C." Happier days came when he married the gifted daughter of his relative and friend, Menicucci. His home life was stimulating and sympathetic. He had four children; to a daughter he gave the symbolic name of "Liberty." Again death came to crush his spirit; his little boy, Dante, three years old, died the same year as Carducci's mother. The latter, of fine Florentine family, had been a loved comrade to her son; and although he was reconciled to her death in old age, he rebelled, in deep grief, at the loss of the little boy, declaring "three parts of his life" had departed. The elegiac stanzas, "Funere mersit acerbo," [2] written in a mood of longing for the child, are pathetic.

His poems, as collected previous to 1870, showed political agitation and frequent bitterness and satire; many of these had appeared in the periodical, *Il Poloziano.* In 1860 he went to Pistoia as Professor of Greek and Latin; there he wrote his poem, "Sicilia e la rivoluzione," celebrating Garibaldi's Sicilian Expedition of that time. During the next ten years he

[2] Found in original and translation in *Carducci: a Selection of His Poems,* etc. by G. L. Bickersteth, London, 1913, p. 141.

passed through political changes of allegiance; when his *Hymn to Satan*[3] appeared, and "made him famous in a day," (republished in 1869 over signature of "Enotrio Romano") extolling the advance of Liberalism over the reactionary influences of both monarchy and church, he was declared to be an unqualified Republican. It was a daring *motif* that the poet chose for his voice of "Revolt"; it required courage, at that time, to summon as witnesses to the progress of the "lord of the feast, Satan," such names as Savonarola and Luther, Huss and Wycliffe. One reason for the immediate popularity of this poem may have been the flowing, almost lilting, form of four-line stanzas.

Seven years before the publication of *Hymn to Satan,* Carducci had become identified, as professor, with the University of Bologna; here he remained until his death—a period of forty-six years of educational service. The first offer from Mamiani, as Minister of Education, was to the Turin Lycée but the poet was unwilling to leave Tuscany. After a little delay the chair of elocution—and later of literature —was open to him at Bologna. His influence upon students of all types was stimulating, always conducive to individual expression and ambition. After the appearance of *Hymn to Satan* he was in marked dis-

[3] *Ibid.,* p. 8.

favor with the government. His liberal ideas were in high favor with the students, however, so that it seemed wise to "make a change" by offering him a position to teach Latin at Naples. Carducci refused on the ground that he was not qualified to teach Latin. He was prohibited from continuing classroom instruction at Bologna, on the ground of "constant opposition to the acts of the Government." Affairs were quieted by a change of ministers and the poet, wisely, refrained from promulgating political doctrines in the University, or from giving dominance to them in his later volumes of poems, like *Levia grandia,* in 1867, and *Nuove poesie,* in 1873. Mr. Bickersteth has emphasized duly the more restrained, tender note in the later volume, following soon after the loss of his mother and his son. So different were the lyrics from his previous type, so surely did they show the influence of Goethe, Schiller, and Heine, in romanticism, that some critics accused Carducci of being a mere imitator, or even a plagiarist. This challenge aroused his ever-present spirit and he wrote the prose defense, with broad as well as personal comment, *Critica ed arte.*

As lecturer, he became yearly more popular and students from distant places hastened to come under his inspiration. He was one of the noteworthy exponents of Dante. When Rome established a chair of Dante Exigesis, Carducci was appointed as pro-

fessor. Although sorry to lose him at Bologna, the whole country applauded the honor. He hesitated, because he was not in accord with those who interpreted Dante by contemporary political conditions, those who had founded the chair at Rome. Later he became one of "four leading Dante scholars" who gave short courses of lectures each year. At his first lecture there was an effort to make a political demonstration by the anti-Papal party. Among his sentences at this first discourse he said, "Papacy and Empire, their discord and their power, were passing away when Dante was born—Dante who does not pass away." In an earlier sonnet, published in essays in 1874, he had interpreted what he believed were Dante's views and the reason for his immortal fame:[4]

Dante, whence comes it that my vows and voice,
Adoring thy proud lineaments I raise;
That, o'er thy verse, which made thee lean and wan,
The sun may set, the new dawn finds me still?

I hate thy Holy Empire; with my sword
I should have thrust the crown from off the head
Of thy good Frederick in Olona's vale.
O'er church and Empire, both now ruins sad,
Thy song soars up, and high in heaven resounds—
Though Jove may die, the poet's hymn remains.

With one of those marked changes in his impulses

[4] *Italian Influences: Carducci and Dante* by Eugene Schuyler, New York, 1901, p. 24. By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

and convictions which ever characterized Carducci, he broke away from tendencies towards German Romanticism and declared a "literary revolution" as his purpose in writing his most familiar odes, *Odi barbare,* 1873–1877. Back to the poetry of Greece and Rome he would lead the people, away from the romanticists and "sickly sentimentalism." To his friends, Chiarini and Targioni, who were critics of these odes, he declared that the world's greatest poets had been Homer, Pindar, Theocritus, Sophocles, and Aristophanes.[5] There was a great variety of meter in this collection; several poems that lacked rhymes seemed, to the hackneyed critics, unconventional in form. Mr. Bickersteth has informing comments upon Carducci's *Metres in the Barbarian Odes* and other poems, in his Introduction to his *Selection of Poems,* already cited. Among the examples of the Italian poet at his best, his most simple, flexible, and musical lines, one recalls from this collection such verses as "The Ideal," "The Mother," and "By the Urn of Percy Bysshe Shelley." Addressing one of his imaginary Greek women, Lalage, he unfolds his own deep, loving appreciation of the English poet in such couplets as these:[6]

[5] *Impressioni e ricordi* by Chiarini, p. 237.

[6] *Carducci: a Selection of His Poems* by G. L. Bickersteth, Copyright by Longmans, Green & Co., London and New York, 1913. By permission of Longmans, Green & Co.

Vain are the joys of the present, they come and they fade like
a blossom,
Only in death dwells the truth and loveliness but in past days.

Lo, on the mount of the centuries Clio hath nimbly descended,
And bursts into song as she spreads her magnificent wings to
the sky.

* * * * * * * *

O heart of hearts, o'er this urn, thy cold, uncongenial prison,
The warm spring blossoms again with the fragrance of flower
and fruit.

O heart of hearts, thy divine great father, the Sun, hath arisen,
And lovingly bathes thee in light, poor heart that forever art
mute.

This poem, inspired by the grave of Shelley, is one of the most beautiful and appealing of the odes; to him the English poet was, in truth, "Poet of liberty," with a "spirit Titanic." In spite of the simplicity and directness of Carducci's diction his poems have defied many translators, especially in English. It is interesting to note that two of his German translators have been winners of the Nobel prize in literature, Paul Heyse and Theodor Mommsen.

In this same volume, *Odi barbare,* was a poem which attracted wide attention in Italy and aroused some indignation among the former friends of Carducci who had Republican principles. It was the tribute entitled "To the Queen," dated November 20, 1878. While it was essentially an effusion to the grace, beauty, and

literary gifts of Queen Marguerite as an individual, it resounded with the Hail! ("Long Live!") which has come down from Hebrew days for king and queen. Although a Liberal to the end of his life, Carducci relinquished his antagonism to monarchy as he grew older and gentler in spirit. The influence of his friend in political life, Crispi, caused a reaction in Carducci from alliance with Republicanism, which veered towards Socialism, and an alignment again with the monarchical party. The final pledge of this political change was chronicled in the tribute to King Albert Charles in the poem, "Piedmonte," in 1890. In the same year the poet was elected as senator and served for a brief time. To him Liberty now became an ideal for art, literature and religion, as well as for the State.

Although the more serious interpreters of Carducci's political fluctuations trace the gradual, and reasonable, steps from hatred of monarchy to acceptance and even poetic homage, there are other commentators who give a romantic flavor to the change of attitude. They declare that the new allegiance may be explained by a visit that the King and Queen made to Bologna. Carducci was lame and disinclined to meet people socially; he was immersed in his books and a few friends, outside his University classes. The story runs that Queen Marguerite, who was a literary critic and

sponsor of the arts, invited the poet to an audience. Such an invitation is a summons but Carducci went unwillingly. He came away, however, from the visit inspired by the Queen's appreciative sympathy and her literary insight. Thenceforward she was to him "Eterno femminino Regale." Letters passed between the Queen and the poet. Their friendship has been compared to that of Michelangelo and Vittoria Colonna, in inspirational quality.

As the years passed the Queen was able to serve both the poet and her country, for Carducci's health and finances became impaired. In 1899 he suffered a stroke of paralysis which crippled him somewhat but he continued his work at the University, assisted by his favorite pupil, the poet Severino Ferrari. That he might not be obliged to sell his valuable library the Queen purchased this, with the arrangement that he might use it during his life. After his death she purchased his home, also, and gave this to the Italian people as a memorial, "Casa Carducci," with a beautiful garden, adorned with statuary that symbolizes some of his poems. In 1904 the government gave him a pension and the University students honored him with a celebration. The next year the sudden death of his assistant, Ferrari, was a terrible loss to him and left him enfeebled in body and spirit. When the Nobel prize was awarded the next year, he was

unable to leave his chair to receive it; the King of Sweden sent a deputy to Bologna to give the testimonial in person to the aged poet. He lived only two months after this honor; his funeral at Bologna was attended by thousands. Because of his Florentine descent and his literary rank, the city of Florence offered for him a tomb in Sta. Croce, the Italian Pantheon, but his family preferred a burial place just outside Bologna.

As a poet Carducci mingled vigor and grace to an unusual degree. He was an artist both in his conceptions and his forms; he never left a poem unfinished. His historical odes, resultant from his classical studies, are less impressive than such lyrics as "Night," "Fiesole," "Idyll of the Maremma," "Before San Guido," "Virgil," and "Primo Vere" which are found in translations by Mrs. Maud Holland.[7] A wistful sadness is found in many of his poems of nature and life, a sensitiveness to insincerity, a change from a mood of hopefulness to that of longing and question. Such poetic traits are marked in the poem, "Primo Vere," a delicate spring-song with gentle sadness;

> Behold! from sluggish winter's arms
> Spring lifts herself again;

[7] *Poems by Giosuè Carducci:* with an introduction and translations by Maud Holland, New York, 1907.

Naked before the steel-cold air
She shivers, as in pain,
Look, Lalage, is that a tear
In the sun's eye that shines so clear?
Today my spirit sleeps and dreams,
Where do my far thoughts fly?
Close to thy beauty's face we stand
And smile, the spring and I:
Yet, Lalage, whence come those tears?
Has Spring, too, felt the doom of years? [8]

In his old age Carducci declared that "[illegible] guiding principles had been three—in politics, Italy before all things; in art, classical poetry before all things; in life, sincerity and strength before all things." [9] As he mellowed in his political opinions, so he became less vehement against the church and Christianity in later writings. In truth, it was not Christianity but asceticism and bigotry which he combated. Like many poets he regretted the loss of some of the best marks of pure paganism; he found in it truth and freedom, in contrast with many evidences of falsehood and slavery in the Christian world of his day. He did not always get a vision of life as a whole, only a segment which was sometimes distorted in perspective. He was more interested in historical and poetic figures than in creative types. Italy of the past and her

[8] *Edinburgh Review,* April, 1909. By permission of Leonard Scott Publication Co.
[9] *Ibid.,* "The Poetry of Carducci."

classic literature were his ideals in his later writings. Rejecting romanticism as exotic, he pleaded for "the representation of reality with truth." In summary of his aim and its fulfillment, Mr. Bickersteth has written with lucidity: "Carducci's conception of reality, considered from the artistic point of view, controls his treatment of all the chief themes of his poetry, as will at once become apparent if we examine any of these at all closely. Man, Nature, Liberty, for instance—he held it incumbent upon the poets of his own time to deal mainly with these three, and they constitute accordingly a large portion of the subject-matter of his own verse." It is difficult to identify the word idealism with much of Carducci's poetry about women—for he was strongly realistic in his love poems, in general, often compared to Walt Whitman in his emphasis of the physical attractiveness of woman. Again, he too often failed in his efforts to adapt old Latin forms to modern themes and reflections. In spite of such defects, however, Carducci's poetry at his best, his earnest patriotism and his hopes for Italy, reflects his country, says Mr. Bickersteth, "in her purest and serenest aspect, and her ideals linked on to many, if not all, the most cherished traditions of her past." [10]

[10] *Carducci: a Selection of His Poems* by G. L. Bickersteth, London and New York, 1913. By permission of Longmans, Green & Co.

CHAPTER VI

THE WRITINGS OF RUDYARD KIPLING BEFORE AND AFTER THE AWARD

The prize of 1907 has been awarded:

Kipling, Rudyard, born 1865: "in consideration of the power of observation, originality of imagination, and also the manly strength in the art of perception and delineation that characterize the writings of this world-renowned author." [1]

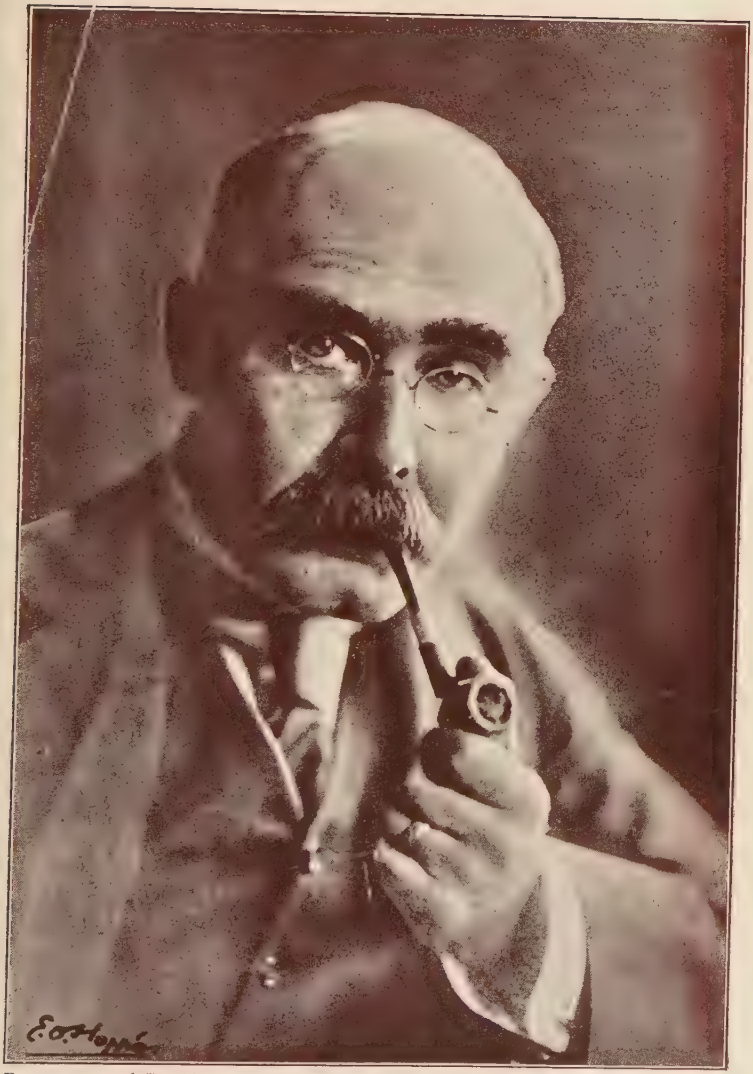
Six years passed after the first prizes were given in literature from the Nobel fund; the countries honored thus far had been France, Germany, Norway, Spain, Italy, and Poland. "Where is Great Britain on the literary map?" asked certain speakers and writers. Names of British authors had been sent to the Committee of the Nobel Foundation and the Swedish Academy, with ardent commendation by individuals and academic circles. Prominent among such names, suggested in the press, had been Swinburne, George Meredith, John Morley, Thomas Hardy, Barrie, and Robert Bridges. One journal asked, "Why not Kipling?" The answer came in the announcement that the award for 1907 was given to Rudyard Kipling, poet

[1] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1907.

and story-teller. Again the issue, "What is Idealism?" was raised and challenged by some opponents of this choice yet, on the whole, it met with wide favor. Kipling's type of robust idealism was defended; said W. B. Parker, "His idealism needs no other evidence than the enthusiastic following he has had from boys." [2]

Combined with this *robust idealism* are two other qualities of Kipling as writer, that have given him "the enthusiastic following of boys"—his virility and courage. For adolescents and college youths he has upheld the ideals of vigorous action, of honor and bravery, of daring in speech and deed. In his dynamic poems and tales of *The Day's Work, Kim, Life's Handicap,* and the other volumes so familiar, he reflects his "gospel" of fearlessness, that does not hesitate to shock some who abide by the conventional standards of speech. Gilbert K. Chesterton has said forceful truths about this trait of Kipling in *Heretics:* he affirms that credit is due to Kipling for his appreciation of *slang* and *steam.* He expands the thought thus: "Steam may be, if you like, a dirty by-product of science. Slang may be, if you like, a dirty by-product of language. But at least he has been among the few who saw the living parentage of these things and knew that where there is smoke, there is fire—

[2] *World's Work,* February, 1908.



By courtesy of Doubleday, Page & Co. *Photograph by E. O. Hoppe*

RUDYARD KIPLING

that is, wherever there is the foulest of things there, also, is the purest." [3] Mr. Chesterton declares that Kipling's type of courage is not that of war, nor valor of the battle-field, but "that interdependence and efficiency which belongs quite as much to engineers, or sailors, or mules, or railway engineers." Recurrent in memory are such tales as "The Bridge-Builders," "The Ship That Found Herself," ".007," "With the Night Mail" and "Wireless."

One trait sharply differentiates Kipling from some of his colleagues among the Nobel prize winners. He is a patriot-poet but with less ardent tribute than is found in the verse of Mistral and Björnson and Heidenstam. Perhaps his open criticism of his country in certain political crises has barred him from the laureateship. His frank, democratic attitude in later years, somewhat in contrast with earlier utterances of imperialism, finds expression in every stanza of "A Pilgrim's Way." Few poets, however, have written such magnetic lines in urgence of "fitness," honor and service for country as has Kipling, in the familiar words of "If," "For All We Have and Are," "The Children's Song," and the refrain in the poem in *Land and Sea Tales for Scouts and Scoutmasters*—

[3] *Heretics* by Gilbert K. Chesterton, London and New York, 1915, 1919. By permission of Dodd, Mead & Co.

Be fit—be fit—for honour's sake be fit!

He is patriotic with the world knowledge of a traveled man; two examples in proof are found in "The Return" and "The English Flag," with the pertinent query—

And what should they know of England who only England know?

In recent years it has been a "fad" in certain journals to depreciate Kipling and to charge against him faults of narrowness in outlook and lack of modernism. Especially during the years of the war and its immediate aftermath one found tones of sad, somewhat cynical writing. In large measure this was due to the personal trials of the time and the loss of his son. That elegiac poem, "My Boy Jack; 1914–1918," will live as a heart-gripping memorial. In his speech at the Sorbonne, November 19, 1921, he gave evidences of spiritual recovery; he said, "One cannot resume a broken world as easily as one can resume a broken sentence. But before long our sons who have spent themselves in suffering and toiling to abolish the menace of barbarism will recover also from the menace of moral lassitude." With old-time sprightliness and vigor he wrote, in the spring of 1924, the stanzas "A Song of the French Roads," after a visit to France and the joyful experience of finding

the roads to the border, that had been laid out by Napoleon and devastated by the war, were now repaired and open to traffic.[4]

It was the Kipling of the earlier years of writing who received the Nobel prize. He was forty-two years old, one of the youngest winners. He had already published volumes of prose and verse that would be creditable to a writer of twice his age. Born at Bombay, December 30, 1865, he inherited intellectual promise from both parents. His father, John Lockwood Kipling, an artist, was at that time Director of the Lahore School of Industrial Art. He was a delightful story-teller and expertly trained in technical and artistic knowledge. He illustrated some of his son's earlier tales; a book by him, entitled *Beast and Man in India,* with unusual drawings, was attributed to Rudyard Kipling (London, 1891). Alice MacDonald, the mother, gave to her son a keen zest in life and a rare sense of humor. Her devotion has had many lines of commemoration, notably in such a poem as "Mother O' Mine."

The boy was named Joseph Rudyard but he seldom used the first name. The second, in memory of a lake in England where his father and mother had met, is so arresting and unique that it has been called one of the causes of his first appeal to the curious public.

[4] *Literary Digest,* July 5, 1924.

After his early boyhood in India, leaving with him strong impressions and love for the land, he was sent to Southsea, Devonshire, to school and later to the United Services College at Westward Ho. He was homesick for his mother and found it difficult to mix well with the English-born boys. *Stalky & Co.* is largely autobiographical of this period. In 1880 he returned to India, anxious to enter journalism and know the native people, especially in the army. The story runs that once, when Kipling was doing journalistic work in Lahore, the Duke of Connaught visited the place and asked the young man what he would prefer to do in India. The reply came promptly, "I would like, sir, to live with the army for a time, and go to the frontier to write up Tommy Atkins." The request was granted and the literary results in later years are listed in *Department Ditties, Soldiers Three, Under the Deodars,* and many more stories in volumes, from *Plain Tales from the Hills* to *Eyes of Asia.*

Much discussion has been rife about the truth or exaggeration of Kipling's pictures of India, especially types of army men and officers' wives. Many critics, who have traveled in India, affirm the photographic quality of the tales and verse but some raise the issue of the tone—is it sincere or sardonic? Others, who claim to have talked with certain "natives," condemn

both the spirit and the characterizations. To the charge of insincerity or disloyalty there seems to be a firm answer in the friendly Prelude to *Departmental Ditties,* which has a prominent place in the Inclusive Edition of *Rudyard Kipling's Verse.* He lays stress, in the last stanza, upon "the jesting guise" but he emphasizes, also, his loyalty to these people, especially in the second stanza:

> Was there aught that I did not share
> In vigil or toil or ease,—
> One joy or woe that I did not know,
> Dear hearts across the seas?[5]

During these years from 1882 to 1889, while he was doing journalistic work and associating with civil and military representatives in Lahore, Bombay, and Mandalay, he was writing stories and verses which appeared in the newspaper columns of India. The first issue in book form was by A. H. Wheeler & Co. of Allahabad, a little book in gray paper covers which was sold at railway stations. In his own hand and with striking illustrations, Kipling edited some of his early tales; one such, "Wee Willie Winkie," dedicated to his mother, with others that formed "an illustrated set," found a purchaser in J. Pierpont Morgan, in recent years at a price stated to be $17,000.[6]

[5] *Rudyard Kipling's Verse:* Inclusive Edition, Garden City, N. Y., 1924, p. 3. By permission of Mr. Kipling and Doubleday, Page & Co.
[6] *Bookman,* 25: 561.

When Kipling was twenty-five years old, with his memory packed with scenes of adventure and characters in India, and his pockets filled with unpublished tales and verse, he decided to try his literary fate in England. He traveled by way of the Pacific to California and reached New York with hopes of editorial encouragement because he had letters of introduction. He was not received with cordiality; perhaps in later years some of these editors and publishers regretted their lost chance to launch à new genius. In London, he attracted attention slowly but, with influence from family and officials, he won recognition by critics and reading-public. One of the first to appreciate Kipling's unique work was Andrew Lang; later he was severe in criticism of certain faults. One of his essays upon Kipling of the earlier *Tales* is included in *Essays in Little* (Scribner's, 1891). It has a prophetic note, an emphasis of "the brilliance of colour," the strange, varied themes, the "perfume of the East."

The Nobel prize was given to Kipling because of these qualities of his earlier work, as well as his more mature, potent messages. He had, from the first, rare ability to revivify, to secure for future generations of readers the real and the romantic in Anglo-India of the later nineteenth century. He preserved the landscapes, the customs, the ideals, the intrigues, the foibles, even the slang of the natives and the British

soldiers. Just as Mistral saved the language and romances of Provence from oblivion, in his *Mireio* and other poems; just as Björnson recorded the almost forgotten sagas of Norway and blended these with modern, peasant life; so Kipling made literary use of this unfamiliar material of India. His idealism converted the ordinary, often petty and rough aspects of life, into stories and verses of undying flavor like "The Phantom Rickshaw," *Soldiers Three,* "Drums of the Fore and Aft," "On the City Wall," "M'Andrew's Hymn," "Danny Deever," "Mandalay" and "The Lover's Litany." Here are recorded days of adventure and danger, nights of memory and longing. In 1902, more than ten years after he left India, he wrote one of his most appealing poems, "The Broken Men," the exiles from England with their pluck and their pathos, which grips the sympathies like those tales of O. Henry about the American self-imposed "exiles" in Central America.

The later visit that Kipling made to the United States cheered his heart, in contrast to the earlier reception. He had met Caroline Balestier, sister of Wolcott Balestier, a young man with whom Kipling became intimate in London and with whom he collaborated in the novel, *The Naulahka.* Their home was in Brattleboro, Vermont. In 1892 Miss Balestier was married to Kipling in All Soul's Church,

Portland Place, London. They came to Vermont to live for a few years in the unique house, which Kipling built for his bride overlooking Brattleboro. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle accredits him with "chivalrous devotion" to his wife, which caused him to come to America lest she might miss her home and friends.[7] Before coming to America they took a journey "round the world," or a segment of it. The death of Wolcott Balestier was a deep grief to his friend and a loss to American literature. In dedicatory elegy (*Barrack-Room Ballads*) Kipling wrote the lines of noble characterization:

E'en as he trod that day to God so walked he from his birth,
In simpleness and gentleness and honour and clean mirth.[8]

For the little daughter, who died at an early age, Kipling wrote his first *Jungle Book*. In this American home he wrote, also, many of the poems collected in *The Seven Seas* and the short stories, *Many Inventions*. In the latter book were the daring pictures of life like "The Disturber of Traffic," the haunting tale of "The Lost Legion," and the tragic "Love o' Women." The inspiration of Mrs. Kipling, her perfect appreciation of her husband's gifts and moods, and her gracious influence have been attested by him

[7] *Memories and Adventures* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Boston, 1924.

[8] By permission of Mr. Kipling.

in many tender words, as well as in the more impersonal tributes to womanhood of brains and heart, which one finds expressed in *From Sea to Sea* or "His Chance in Life." The world will never forget the persistent story that Mrs. Kipling saved, from the wastebasket, that grand hymn of all time, "The Recessional." In some of his tales he antagonized Americans, notably in *The Light That Failed* and "An Habitation Enforced" in *Actions and Reactions;* as compensation one recalls "An Error of the Fourth Dimension" from *Plain Tales,* the story of Wilton Sargent, American.

The writing of Kipling showed advance in form during the decade from 1890 to 1900. There was gradual elimination of the jingoism and cynicism which tainted some of his earlier work. In 1897 he visited South Africa again. He recounted an actual experience in riding on a Cape Government Railway in his tale ".007," among the stories in *The Day's Work,* published in 1898. In this same collection is found "The Brushwood Boy," a masterpiece of mystic idealism which will stand beside his more poetic allegory, "They." The year 1899 has been regarded sometimes as a crisis in the life of Kipling which affected his later writing. On his arrival in New York, in the late autumn of that year, he was attacked by a severe case of pneumonia and was desperately ill

for many weeks. The press of America, England, and the Continent awaited the bulletins with anxiety. He recovered but some critics have affirmed that he lost his vigor and literary power. Looking over the dates of his poems, and recalling the books which have appeared since this crisis, such a surmise is not warranted. One could scarcely expect that any author could continue to write, on a level or ascending scale, many more books about India than he had already written or many more poems of vital spell like "If," "When Earth's Last Picture is Painted," and "M'Andrew's Hymn."

He had already proved his ability to write for children and adolescents. Few books among juveniles surpass, in visualization and imaginative skill, *The Jungle Books, Just So Stories,* and that pioneer sea tale that has gained favor with the years, *Captains Courageous.* In the years that followed his serious illness, he wrote tales of clever inventiveness collected in *Puck of Pook's Hill, Rewards and Fairies,* and *Kim.* To this period belong, also, many of the poems collected in the volume, *The Five Nations.* Who will say that there was decadence of literary power, any lapse of dramatic skill, in that story of *Kim,* or Kimball O'Hara, the orphan boy of Lahore? The boys of to-day—and normal girls—have wholesome "thrills" at this lad's story, his pilgrimages over India

with the Tibetan lama, and his final adoption by the regiment to which his father had belonged. Humor, adventure, vivid photographs of places and people—all are mingled in this tale. When it appeared in the London edition of 1901, the father of Kipling contributed some of the striking illustrations.

The Five Nations of this later period gave permanence in form to such vital poems as "White Horses," "Our Lady of the Snows" (the beautiful ode to Canada), "The Dykes," "The Feet of the Young Men," "Boots," "The Explorer," and "The Recessional." "Buddha at Kamakura," which first appeared in *Kim,* should be listed in this collection. Are there here traces of lapse in form or spontaneity compared with the earlier, less restrained verses in *Departmental Ditties* or *Barrack-Room Ballads?* In *Traffics and Discoveries,* published in 1904, are found such literary achievements as "Wireless," "They," and "The Army of a Dream." Kipling had shown his keen observation, humor, and appreciation of varied beauties of Nature in his volumes of travel-sketches and letters, *From Sea to Sea* and *Letters of Travel.* "In Sight of Monadnock" contains a brief, fine description of that distant New Hampshire peak. With his long experience in travel and adjustment to diverse conditions of life, Kipling has ever been a poet of home, national and domestic. His poem, "Sussex,"

written in 1902, has deep feeling as well as notable lines of description and a rhythmic swing.

New poets and story-writers came into prominence with the twentieth century. Although Kipling was in his full maturity and vigor when the Nobel prize was awarded, with years of promising, creative work before him, he had been so long before the public that it became the fashion, in some brilliant, cynical groups, to speak of him as belonging to the older generation. His volumes attracted less attention in competition with those of mere "modernism." The announcement of the Nobel prize, in 1907, aroused interest anew in every country. In looking over the Kipling bibliographical cards, in the Widener Library at Harvard University, it is interesting to find records of translations of his books into Danish, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Swedish. The journals took occasion to review what he had accomplished in literature before 1907, to commend or reprove the decision of the Swedish Academy in giving him a prize for "idealistic" literature. Some cited his imperialistic "complex" and quoted "The Man Who Would Be King." In *Current Literature* for October, 1908, are quotations from diverse opinions: Said the *London Nation:* "There is hardly any English writer more closely identified with the doctrine of force or a firmer

believer that the Deity is to be found on the side of the big battalions." The *New York World* declared, "He sings of blood-lust, with a schoolboy's disregard of consequences." The *Chicago Post* believed that his idealism was "the idealization of might" but it praised his strong, Biblical English.

Comments of this kind fail to recognize the *two,* paradoxical traits in Kipling's nature and writings. There is stark realism, sometimes relentless, as in "The Courtship of Dinah Shadd," "The Gate of a Hundred Sorrows," "My Son's Wife," or poems like "The Galley-Slave," "Danny Deever," and "Kitchener's School." Close beside this realism, penetrating and often sordid, sounds a note of idealism, a promise of "a happy issue out of all troubles," a vision that comes to an idealist. Recall that in *The Day's Work,* there is the tense, realistic tale of "The Devil and the Deep Sea," and, within a few pages, the idyll of "The Brushwood Boy."

Since the Nobel prize was received, Kipling has written with less frequency and more unevenness of form. Some of the prose and verse reflects the war, like "Fringes of the Fleet," "Sea Warfare," "France," and the "History of the Irish Guards." Not soon forgotten will be that tribute to Roosevelt, tender and virile, "Great-Heart" (1919). In the collected poems, *The Years Between,* there are challenging war

poems, "For All We Have and Are," an appeal to England, and "The Choice, or The American Spirit Speaks," for the United States. The elegy to "Lord Roberts," less militant in tone, is true poetry in emotion and measure. Some stanzas are touched by irony, and have the sermonic quality which is characteristic—"The Sons of Martha," "En-Dor" and "Russia to the Pacifists." The juvenile of 1923, *Land and Sea Tales for Boys and Girls* (or *for Scouts and Scoutmasters*) is uneven in quality but it has two dramatic sketches. *Eyes of Asia,* portraits of Europeans as seen by Oriental eyes, is more comparable to mediocre pages in *Actions and Reactions* than it is to the more vital stories in *Plain Tales* and *The Day's Work.* "Fumes of the Heart" is the best of these later tales.

Mr. Kipling is reaping honors in educational and civic life. His reserve, which is sometimes rated as coldness, keeps him far from the limelight of publicity. He cannot be persuaded to "come to America" as lecturer or reader, in the train of many of his compatriots of far less worth or fame. In his Sussex home, with family and a few friends about him, he is a delightful *raconteur* or conversationalist upon topics of world-wide politics. He is more amused than angered at some of the petty criticisms upon his writing, like the recent attack upon "Mandalay" for its anachronisms in geography, not unlike the charges

against Shakespeare in *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*. Arnold Bennett, in *Books and Persons*,[9] has some comments upon Kipling's flaws in *Actions and Reactions* and his "prejudices and clayey ideals," but he ends with tribute to him as a painstaking artist, devoted to his craft.

Philip Guedalla, brilliant journalist and ironist, in his essays, *A Gallery*, under caption of "Mandalay," says "much in little" about the "remoteness and antiquity" of Kipling; he finds him so "antiquated" that the "Dinosaurus" might give him "points in modernity." Despite such witty extravagances, however, the critic admits that Kipling "has sharpened the English language to a knife-edge and with it has cut brilliant patterns on the surface of our prose literature." [10] In both his prose and poetry he has "sharpened the English language to a knife-edge." His verses may seem "antiquated" to the reader whose exclusive tastes welcome only "new poetry" and sneer at "lilting rhymes" and conventional meters. To broader minds, however, there is appreciation of the vibrant messages of spiritual courage, the bold and graphic excerpts from real life, in both the verse and the fiction of Kipling at his best.

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[9] George H. Doran, New York, 1917.

[10] *A Gallery* by Philip Guedalla, New York, 1924. By permission of G. P. Putnam's Sons.

One of the honors that came to this writer recently was an invitation to give the Rectorial Address at St. Andrews University, in 1923. This has been published in book form as *Independence,* similar in format to that of Barrie's address, on a kindred occasion, entitled *Courage.* Mr. Kipling urges here the fundamental duty of developing one's individuality: "After all," he says, "yourself is the only person you can by no possibility get away from in this life, and maybe, in another. It is worth a little pains and money to do good to him." [11]

His idealism is not that of mere sentiment, much less of sentimentality. It is the idealism of work, of action, of responsibility. It is the idealism even in the midst of misjudgments, of carrying "The White Man's Burden," of training youth towards clean, productive manhood. One grants that some of his writings, both prose and verse, might be eliminated from collections and memory, with an increase in his literary rank. He is uneven and was prone, in his earlier days, to mistake coarseness for vigor, yet he has been able to make his readers both *listen* and *see.* Perhaps he has not maintained the almost unanimous favoritism among college youths that he had two decades ago—

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[11] *Independence:* Rectorial Address at St. Andrews by Rudyard Kipling, New York, 1924. By permission of Mr. Kipling and Doubleday, Page & Co.

there have been competitors with "college stories" of rank realism—but it may be questioned if any author of our day is more often quoted among both educated and unlettered adults. Mr. Kipling has never been tempted to lower his standards for commercial ends; with fearless truth, he has spoken messages of uprightness and service. "A Song of the English" is national, perhaps imperialistic, but it has, like scores of his other stanzas, a catholic message to Christian nations everywhere:

Keep ye the Law—be swift in all obedience—
Clear the land of evil, drive the road and bridge the ford.
Make ye sure to each his own
That he reap where he hath sown;
By the peace among our peoples let men know we serve the Lord![12]

[12] *Rudyard Kipling's Verse:* Inclusive Edition, Garden City, N. Y., 1924. By permission of Mr. Kipling and Doubleday, Page & Co.

CHAPTER VII

SELMA LAGERLÖF—SWEDISH REALIST AND IDEALIST

The prize of 1909 has been awarded:

Lagerlöf, Selma, born 1858: "because of the noble idealism, the wealth of fancy and the spiritual quality that characterize her works." [1]

"I declare it to be my express desire that in the awarding of the prizes no consideration whatever be paid to the nationality of the candidates, that is to say, that the most deserving be awarded the prize, whether of Scandinavian origin or not." These words from the will of Alfred Nobel had been faithfully obeyed during the first eight years of the awards in literature. Only once had the prize been given to a Scandinavian, to Björnson, the Norwegian, in 1903. When the announcement came that the winner for 1909 was the Swedish writer, Selma Lagerlöf, the most severe critics of the Nobel Foundation Committee in former years were either commendatory or silently acquiescent. Here was an author who richly deserved the prize, for she was already known

[1] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1909.

By courtesy of The American-Scandinavian Foundation

SELMA LAGERLÖF

throughout Europe and America for her unique fiction, in which photographic realism was always blended with a dominant note of idealism. The juvenile book which combined geography, fancy, humor, and fascination for old and young, *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils,* and other books had followed the strange tale of folklore and character study, *The Story of Gösta Berling;* these writings were outstanding evidences of her literary gifts. It was an honor to womanhood everywhere that the Nobel prize was given to Selma Lagerlöf, first of the countrymen of Nobel to be thus immortalized in literature. In her years of teaching and her later messages from the press, she had shown her sincere purpose "to benefit mankind."

It is interesting to note that the family name of this woman means "laurel leaf," a symbol of her fame. In *Mårbacka*, one of her later books to be translated into English, the reader finds detached photographs of the home and environment of this author's girlhood. Mrs. Velma Swanston Howard, who has been so successful as translator of Miss Lagerlöf's books, knows perfectly the languages of both Sweden and England; she is a friend of the author, with kinship in her traditions and spirit, and thus has sustained that indefinable but pervading "atmosphere" which characterizes all of Miss Lagerlöf's fiction. The setting of *Mårbacka* is alive with elements of Nature and

humanity, with folklore and "wonderful tales of old Varmland" which became the basis for many of her later books. The spacious manor house, where Selma Lagerlöf was born sixty-seven years ago, becomes familiar to readers of this autobiography. The nursery chairs, with individual names and portraits of Johan, Anna, and little Selma Ottiliana Louisa, were treasured heirlooms; the beds that "parted company," perhaps, in the night and the old owl in the lumber-loft above the bedroom, contributed infantile "thrills" and memories.

A gay-hearted, courageous, popular man was her father, Lieutenant Lagerlöf, retired from the army but entertaining former associates in his home and recounting, for his daughter's education, tales of earlier history of Sweden and his family. The germ-idea of Gösta Berling, hero of her first romance, came after a reminiscence that her father had told her one morning after breakfast, his memory of "the most fascinating of men," one who could sing, write poetry, dance so that all feet moved in unison, and could bend everyone's will to his own mood—and yet one who lacked certain qualities of manly strength. The mother of Selma Lagerlöf came from two generations of ministers; she was quiet, practical, intuitive, a fine administrator of her large household and frequent guests. Aunt Lovisa gave a touch of romance to the

family circle by a sad chapter in her past that is recounted in "The Bridal Crown," the tragic result (according to legend) of the substitution of whortleberry for myrtle in the wreath for the bride's hair. The nurse, Back-Kaisa, large and stern yet devoted to the family, was another interesting character at Mårbacka; from the old housekeeper and the grandmother the children learned stories, sagas, and bits of family histories.

When Selma Lagerlöf was three and a half years old, after bathing in a fresh-water pond with her father, she developed a form of infantile paralysis. Months of inactivity followed; some lasting results of this disease have been handicaps of the author throughout her life. With humor and realistic portrayal of a child's point of view of this period, she tells in *Mårbacka,* the chapter "Grand Company," how she increased in social importance in the family, having exclusive attention of the grim nurse, and dainties to eat in place of the usual food, much to the jealous disgust of her brother and sister. A sojourn at Stromstead by the sea brought new vigor and recovery of motion to the little girl; with amazement to herself and her family she walked to investigate a brilliant, stuffed "bird of paradise." The sprightly zest in living, which characterizes the author's personality, is reflected in all her books. Animals as pets,

poultry of the farmyard, and birds and flowers are vital factors in her earlier and later tales.

Among important influences of her childhood was the singing of Bellman Ballads, with their humor, pathos, and haunting music. One day when Miss Lagerlöf had won a place among twenty-five chosen candidates at Teachers' College in Stockholm, and had been listening to a lecture about Bellman and Runeberg and their ballads, she had her "flash of inspiration." She determined to tell stories about her own Varmland; she would become narrator of her "Cavaliers" and would incorporate into her tales the legends, folklore and real characters of the home district. She had cherished ambitions to write verse and even plays, from the days when, as a young girl, she visited her uncle in Stockholm and went to the theatre with the old housekeeper, becoming impressed by peasant plays and scenes from Nosselt's *History*. She had lain awake at night, composing rhymes and neglecting the sleep which would have fitted her for the tasks of the next day in "composition and arithmetic." [2]

After graduation she taught at Landskrona, in the

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[2] *Selma Lagerlöf; The Woman, Her Work, Her Message* by Harry E. Maule, Garden City, N. Y., 1917. By permission of Doubleday, Page & Co.

province of Skåne, always hoping to find time to write, always meeting disappointments because of the demands of the classroom, often telling orally some of her tales to her pupils after school hours, always returning to her old home, Mårbacka, in vacations and gaining new impetus for her literary aspirations. Her first chapter of *The Story of Gösta Berling* was composed on a Christmas holiday evening when she, with members of her family, was returning from a party at a distant neighbor's house. A blizzard was raging and she sat in the sleigh, covered with furs, while the old horse, urged by the aged coachman, tried to plough through the drifts, in defiance of the wild winds. In her mind was formulated that chapter of the Christmas night at the smithy, which is an arresting episode in the complete novel. She made first a metrical version; then she tried it in dramatic form and, finally, wrote it as a short story. Later she wrote other episodes—that of the flood at Ekeby and another of the ball. In 1890, at the urgence of her sister, she sent some of these episodic stories to a prize competition, offered by the magazine, *Idun,* for the best novelette of one hundred pages. A few weeks later the journal announced that some of the manuscripts were "so confusedly written that they could not be considered for the prize"; Miss Lager-

löf was sure that hers was among this rejected class. Then came a telegram, signed by three classmates, with the words, "Hearty Congratulations."

The editor offered to publish the novel, in expanded form, if Miss Lagerlöf could have it ready in a short time. Again, she was in despair when a friend, Baroness Aldersparre, arranged financial matters so that the teacher could be given a year's leave of absence—and "the miracle happened." When she had completed this initial story, combining Swedish legend, history of the days of the Cavaliers and the pensioners and the old forges, with humor and delicate idealism, she was dissatisfied because it seemed to her "wild and disjointed." There are passages where the sentences are detached, places where the links in her chain of plot are weak. In structure she has gained skill, as is evident by a comparison of her earlier fiction with such masterworks as the first part of *Jerusalem* and *The Emperor of Portugallia.* With this improved technic, she has kept her spontaneity, her vital realism and intuition, her spiritual insight. After the publication of one of her novels, the *London Times* said, with true emphasis upon her unusual combination of qualities: "She is an idealist pure and simple in a world given over to realism, yet such is the perfection of her style and the witchery of her fancy that a generation of realists worship her." An optimism

which defies apparent failures, akin to that of Browning, brings about the redemption of her characters from Gösta Berling, drunken poet-preacher and fascinating vagabond, and flighty Marianne Sinclair to Liliecrona, the restless violinist, and Glory Golden Sunnycastle, heroine of *The Emperor of Portugallia.*

Mrs. Velma Swanston Howard said, in a recent interview with the writer of this book, that Miss Lagerlöf, like her translator, considers this story of Jan, who calls himself "The Emperor of Portugallia," and his daughter, Glory, as her best work in fiction. Thousands of readers will echo the preference. To the incisive, ruthless realism in this tale she has added sympathy that grips the heart, poetic setting and sagas, and a message that is more impressive because it is dramatic rather than sermonic. The threads of this story are seldom tangled; the pattern stands out with distinctness and artistry.

Invisible Links, a collection of short stories, was published in 1894, with peasants, fisherfolk, children, and animals all "linked" in interrelations of spirit; Miss Lagerlöf then received a yearly stipend for her services to literature, through the friendly interest of the Swedish Academy and King Oscar and his son, Prince Eugen. With a friend she went to Italy and Sicily, gaining impressions that bore harvest in *Miracles of Antichrist,* issued in 1897 and translated

into English two years later by Pauline Bancroft Flach, who had done the same service for *The Story of Gösta Berling* and *Invisible Links.* Mingling traditions and poetry of old Sicily with reactions to modern socialism and its effects upon established religion, Miss Lagerlöf wrote with deep fervor and colorful imagination. The slight plot is evolved about the ruse of the Englishwoman who coveted an image of Christ as a child, in a church in Rome, and substituted an image, seemingly the same but with the legend upon the crown, "My Kingdom is only of this World." By a miracle, a few weeks later, the false image is cast down and the true Christchild stands in the doorway. The Antichrist is taken away to Sicily where miracles of helpfulness are recorded by its agnostic followers. Miss Lagerlöf seeks to preach, through the words of the Pope to Father Gondo, the ideal of unity between Christianity and antichristianity: "You could take the great popular movement in your arms, while it is still lying like a child in its swaddling clothes, and you could bear it to Jesus' feet; and Antichrist would see that he is nothing but an imitation of Christ, and would acknowledge him his Lord and Master." [3]

From a Swedish Homestead, which was published in

[3] *Miracles of Antichrist* by Selma Lagerlöf, translated by Pauline Bancroft Flach, Garden City, N. Y., 1899. By permission of Doubleday, Page & Co.

1899, contains the strong, mystical novelette, "The Story of a Country House." A student at Upsala University loses his reason as a result of seeing his flock of sheep frozen to death in a storm when, by his forethought, the tragedy might have been averted. Known as "The Goat," he wanders about the countryside, selling toys and trinkets, until his redemption and sanity are achieved through his love for a girl of noble character. Among the other short tales in this same volume is "Santa Catarina of Siena," a reflection of the Italian trip, and "The Emperor's Money Chest," which is allegorical yet photographic of Belgium in an industrial crisis.

Two other books preceded the award of the Nobel prize—*Jerusalem* and *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils,* with its sequel. In 1899, the Swedish government gave to Miss Lagerlöf a commission to go to Palestine. She was to report, on her return, upon conditions which she might discover there in the Swedish colony which had migrated from Nås, a parish of Dalecarlia, a few years previously. Urged by promoters of missionary enterprise, among them Mrs. Edward Gordon of Chicago, scores of peasants and householders had sold their homesteads and left their families to join this colony in the Holy Land. Rumors had come to Sweden of direful conditions there—of disease and hunger, of depleted morale and bicker-

ings among colonists and missionaries. "Jerusalem kills!" became a common phrase of the day. Miss Lagerlöf undertook investigation and made a report on existent evils and exaggerated rumors. She accomplished a far more important work for literature than this report. She gathered material for one of her most emotional, graphic books, *Jerusalem*. Against the background of facts, both in Dalecarlia and Palestine, she wove a story of intense feeling, with folklore, psychological insight, and characterization of a fine type. The portrayals of the Ingmarsson family and the women, Brita, Karin, and Gertrude, whose fates were interlinked with those of the later generation of the ancestral family of Dalecarlia, are vivid,

Humor relieves the tragic intensity of this book, so well rendered into English by Mrs. Howard who has, says Mr. Henry Goddard Leach in the Introduction, been able "to reproduce the original in essence as well as verisimilitude." An example of the descriptive style of this story of Swedish life under religious tension is found in the opening sentences of the chapter, "The Departure of the Pilgrims" of Part I.[4] "One beautiful morning in July, a long train of cars and wagons set out from the Ingmar Farm. The Hellgumists had

[4] *Jerusalem* by Selma Lagerlöf, translated by Velma Swanston Howard, Garden City, N. Y., 1916. By permission of Doubleday, Page & Co.

at last completed their arrangements, and were now leaving for Jerusalem—the first stage of the journey being the long drive to the railway station.

"The procession, in moving towards the village, had to pass a wretched hovel which was called Mucklemire. The people who lived there were a disreputable lot—the kind of scum of the earth which must have sprung into being when our Lord's eyes were turned, or when he had been too busy elsewhere.

"There was a whole horde of dirty, ragged youngsters on the place, who were in the habit of running loose all day, shrieking after passing vehicles, and calling the occupants bad names; there was an old crone who usually sat by the roadside, tipsy; and there were a husband and wife who were always quarrelling and fighting, and who had never been known to do any honest work. No one could say whether they begged more than they stole, or stole more than they begged.

"When the Jerusalem-farers came alongside this wretched hovel, which was about as tumbledown as a place can become when wind and storm have, for many years, been allowed to work havoc, they saw the old crone standing erect and sober at the roadside, on the same spot where she usually sat in a drunken stupor . . . and with her were four of the children. All five were now washed and combed, and as decently dressed as it was possible for them to be. . . .

"All the Jerusalem-farers suddenly burst into tears, the grown-ups crying softly, while the children broke into loud sobs and wails. . . . When they had all passed by, Beggar Lina also began to weep.

" 'Those people are going to Heaven to meet Jesus,' she told the children. 'All those people are going to Heaven, but we are left standing by the wayside.' "

Another literary outcome of the visit of Miss Lagerlöf to Palestine was a renewed interest in legends about Jesus and the Virgin Mary. Always deeply religious, with an unusual ability to blend worship with tradition and never lose the distinctive flavor of each element, she wrote the tales that were collected as *Christ Legends,* translated by Mrs. Howard in 1908. Here are new, impressive versions of such old myths as "The Wise Men's Well," "Saint Veronica's Kerchief," and "Robin Redbreast."

The Swedish school authorities wished for a good geography which should be popular with the children and satisfy the teachers. The National Teachers' Association appealed to Miss Lagerlöf for such a book and the results were *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils* and *Further Adventures of Nils,* appearing in 1906 and 1907. These books, so widely read in schools and homes in every civilized country to-day, are worthy a place on the shelves beside *Alice in Wonderland* of the past and *Doctor Doolittle* of the

present type of juveniles. The boy, Nils Holgersson, and his "goosey-gander," with companions on the earth and in the air, appeal to the imagination of all ages, while the information about Sweden's outlines and landmarks is both accurate and entertaining.

Such had been the literary output of Miss Lagerlöf before she was chosen for the Nobel winner of 1909. Already she had been given a gold medal for her work by the Swedish Academy and the degree of LL.D. by the University of Upsala. Five years after the award she was elected to membership in the Swedish Academy, "the eighteen immortals"—the first woman to be thus honored. When the prize was given to her, with a grand fête at Stockholm, she was the guest of honor at a banquet at the Grand Hotel, given by King Gustav V. Her acceptance was in the form of a unique speech, a story, briefly told, of her summons to her father to aid her in saying the right words, this father who, long dead, had been her inspiration for her first work in literature and her spiritual guide in many crises. Wistful beauty and delicate humor were blended in the closing words:[5] "Father sits and ponders a while; then he wipes away the tears of joy, shakes himself, and strikes his fist on the arm of the chair. 'I don't care to sit here any longer and muse

[5] *Selma Lagerlöf: The Woman, Her Work, Her Message* by Harry E. Maule, Garden City, N. Y., 1917. By permission of Doubleday, Page & Co.

on things which no one, either in heaven or on earth, can answer!' he says. 'If you have received the Nobel Prize, I shan't trouble myself about anything but to be happy.'

"Your Royal Highness—Ladies and Gentlemen—since I got no better answer to all my queries, it only remains for me to ask you to join me in a toast of gratitude, which I have the honour to propose to the Swedish Academy."

Miss Lagerlöf was fifty-one years old when this honor came to her; in the years since then she has exemplified, in spoken and written words, "the noble idealism, the wealth of imagination, the soulful quality of her style." Her speech, in 1911, when the International Suffrage Congress was held in Stockholm, was widely read and translated. In this, as in so many of her stories, she stressed the idea of home and its influence throughout every avenue of betterment in the world. This year marked, also, the publication of *Lilliecrona's Home,* translated in English three years later by Anna Barwell. The setting was Varmland and the hero's home, Lövdalla, closely resembles the home of the author, Mårbacka. This is, perhaps, the most poetic and mystical of all her stories. The violinist who found in "music and music alone his home, his place of rest," is a haunting character, sharing many traits with Gösta

Berling. His life-passage is turbulent, often dramatic, sometimes melancholy, ending in a happy romance for him and Maia Lisa, the pastor's daughter. There are scenes of emotional vigor, like "The Bride's Dance" and "The Accusation." These are comparable to the more familiar chapters in *The Story of Gösta Berling,* like that where the autocratic Mistress of Ekeby is driven forth by her pensioners because they discover that she has vowed a soul each year to the devil (in expiation for her secret sin) or the redemptive power of Countess Elizabeth in reclaiming Gösta's manhood. Beautiful descriptions of apple orchards in bloom are found in the later book, interwoven with romantic legends like the excitement for the pastor's daughter when young Lilliecrona comes forward in her dream and offers her water "after the magic pancake," a sure prophecy that he will be her husband.

Against the same background of her girlhood home is placed the later, strong story of *The Emperor of Portugallia.* This is less episodic and more unified than some of her other fiction. Jan, the dull, plodding man with no zest in life until he holds in his arms his little daughter, whom he calls Glory Goldie Sunnycastle, is a vital character; we share his pride in the beauty and charm of Glory, his faith in her even when rumors would smirch her moral character, not without basis, as she goes out into the world to save the

home for Jan and his wife, Katrina, his final act of self-sacrifice when, with clouded mind but spiritual vision, he would save her from the demons of "Pride and Hardness, Lust and Vice." This story has been well called in France "an epic of fatherhood—a Swedish *Père Goriot.*"

In 1922 appeared in the United States *The Outcast,* the English version of *Bannlyst,* as its title was in Swedish when it was published in 1918. The World War entered as a motif in the latter part of the story, sometimes with strained effects. As a work of artistic fiction it seems inferior to *The Story of Gösta Berling* or *The Emperor of Portugallia.* It has virility however, and much intensity of feeling. Although she lived in a neutral country Miss Lagerlöf was deeply stirred by the war and the terrible sacrifices of life. She resented all evidences of brutal humanity. The sacredness of human life forms her keynote in *The Outcast.* Sven Elversson, who had lived through a fearful experience upon an Arctic expedition and had been accused of eating human flesh in an hour of imminent famine, returns to his mother and his home to find himself denounced by the villagers and even by the minister. To save his mother from further torture of spirit, after he has tried in vain to overcome the prejudice of the people by his charity and Christlike deeds, he goes away to the

woods of the Far North. Here he wanders, and is called "The Outcast," until he meets the beautiful wife of the bigoted minister who had preached against Sven, the man who, in unfounded jealousy, had cast off his wife. The love scenes in this book are elemental in their simplicity, yet have poetic touches. Then comes the Battle of Jutland and the frightful scenes when the bodies of the dead are washed upon the shores of his home town. Sven returns and organizes a group of men to bury the dead; in the pocket of one of the victims is found a letter which exonerates Sven from the false charge of cannibalism. It is a daring, grotesque tale in parts, with local color and superstition interwoven with good character-drawing and a dominant message of faith.

An early folk story which has been recently translated by Arthur G. Chater, is entitled *The Treasure.* It is slight in volume and literary value compared with such major books as *Jerusalem* and *The Emperor of Portugallia.* It has features of the spectacular with restrained dramatic power. It lends itself to scenario effects because of the pictorial background and the brilliant contrasts in characters and sentiments. In Sweden of the sixteenth century, in the days of Frederick II of Denmark (who was also ruler of Sweden), occurred this legendary tale. It mingles the sea, with its galleys and its wild storms, with the parsonage and

the hidden treasure chest which was looted. All the family had been murdered by these mysterious robbers except a foster child, Elsalill. The supernatural element is used with fine effects; this girl is haunted by the ghost and messages from her foster sister who was killed. Elsalill is in anguish of spirit because she loves the bold, persuasive, and richly apparelled Sir Archer, although she finds that he is one of the robber-murderers. How her body becomes his shield from the sheriff, even to her death and his escape, forms the romantic climax of this tale.

Miss Lagerlöf's early ambition to become a dramatist has never wholly died; she has written a few plays that have been staged with success in Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. Among these has been a dramatization of *The Girl from the Marshcroft;* this story has been shown as a film in many places in America as well as abroad. The setting in rural picturesqueness, with tragic and romantic notes mingled, affords dramatic opportunities. Mrs. Howard says that *The Story of Gösta Berling* has been shown at the cinema in Sweden and elsewhere in Europe. "Will Miss Lagerlöf ever come to the United States?" we ask her friend and translator. The reply is a probable negative. She is deeply interested in America and reads many books by our authors, especially those of mystical or informing trend. She had an uncle who lived in

Seattle and, on the walls of her dining-room, are found landscapes of Western America. She is not very strong, although never lacking in energy of mind and purpose. The freedom and vivacity of American women impress her as she receives many visitors, either at her summer home at Mårbacka or in the winter at Falun, close to the scenes of the first part of *Jerusalem*. She reads six languages with ease and is conversant with the major interests of every country. She has a keen humor and rare graciousness.

Miss Lagerlöf is intensely racial and national in her literary reflections; she is international in her sympathies and insight into problems of life. Love of home is one of the primal qualities of her personality and writing. She has applied her creed of "keeping the imagination young" by never losing her own delight in sagas, hero tales, and "belief in fairies" that will enhearten and redeem humanity. Edwin Björkman, in *Voices of Tomorrow,* has stressed her ability and courage "to dream and feel and aspire." Her literary work varies in excellence; sometimes it is weak in structure and ineffective in artistry; in other and major portions she has clothed the commonplace incidents of life with original, new vitality and revealed their meanings with imaginative beauty. Her characters and settings are racial but her impulses and messages are universal, unconfined by land or age.

CHAPTER VIII

PAUL HEYSE (1910)—GERHART HAUPTMANN (1912)

The prize of 1910 has been awarded:

Heyse, Paul, born 1830, died April 2, 1914: "as a mark of esteem of an artistry, finished and marked by an ideal conception, which he has shown during a long and significant activity as lyric dramatist, and as an author of romances and famous short stories." [1]

Two German scholars had been winners of the Nobel prize in literature in 1904 and 1908—Theodor Mommsen and Rudolf Eucken. Two more distinguished authors with international reputations were added in 1910 and 1912, making four awards to German literature within eight years. Paul Heyse, the versatile author of the year 1910 has been difficult to classify, because he is dramatist, poet, novelist, and writer of a form of short story known as the *Novelle*. More than one hundred and fifty of these tales are accredited to him, in addition to prodigious industry in other literary forms. The *Novelle* bears some resemblance to the short stories of Hoffmann, Tieck, Al-

[1] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1910.

fred de Musset, and the American masters of this type, Poe, Hawthorne, and O. Henry. In more definite method than some of these *conteurs,* Heyse developed a principle which he applied and explained, in part, in his Introduction to his *Deutscher Novellenschatz;* he stresses the fact that the essential foundation of this form is "what children call the story" but he adds, "A strong silhouette should not be lacking." The "silhouette will be a brief summary of conditions which underlie the focal scene or incident." Thus Heyse became creator, or developer, of this form of fiction, with a wide range of incidents and characters, in which keen observation of life and faithful recital were blended with idealism of a distinctive motive—that of "glorifying nature," human and inanimate.

Johann Ludwig Paul Heyse was born in Berlin, March 15, 1830; he was eighty years old when the Nobel honor was received. His father, Karl Ludwig Heyse, with a firm, Teutonic nature, was a famous philologist and professor at the University of Berlin. His mother came from a Jewish family of wealth and social rank. In his *Memoirs,* her son recalls her as "passionate and imaginative"; from her he inherited his bent toward story-telling and delight in the sensuous which mingled with the rationalistic trend of mind, bequeathed by his father. In the home of the Heyses gathered scholars, authors, and artists. The atmos-

phere fostered the natural precocity of the boy, Paul. One of his older friends was Kugler, the historian of art, who had an inspirational influence upon the youth; in manhood, Heyse married the gifted daughter of this friend.

At the University of Bonn, where Heyse went from Berlin, he showed much interest in Romance languages. He was fascinated with Spanish, especially the writings of Cervantes and Calderon. In 1849, and again in 1852, he traveled in Italy, adding Dante, Boccaccio, and Leopardi to his list of literary heroes. The homes of artists were open to him and he found Italy an ideal land of "colour and grace." Shakespeare received his tribute throughout his literary life. He began to write dramas and lyric poems, tales in verse and prose with youthful zest and marks of great promise. In 1854, King Max of Bavaria offered to him a position at the Court of Munich, at a salary of 1500 florins. Munich was an environment sure to awaken his talent and satisfy his love of beauty. Under Louis I it had been favored with some fine buildings; an atmosphere of culture was pervasive. Among the poets and scholars, with whom Heyse became associated here, were Geibel, Bodenstedt, Wilbrandt, Luogg, and Schack, the historian. In 1868, when Louis II, successor to King Max, insulted Geibel, the poet, and caused him to leave the city, Heyse was depressed al-

though he stayed in Munich, living in a charming villa there until his death in 1914.

From the early years of his authorship, Heyse showed an aristocratic culture which did not dim his interest in fisherfolk, peasants, and rural characters. Although family sorrows came upon him, and he suffered, from 1880 to 1900, from attacks by the ardent followers of Zola and Ibsen, yet he never lost his serenity of character and his belief in individualistic expression. "Instinct" was his guide, as he has exemplified in scores of his tales and dramas. The "child of nature," or the man or woman of inherent nobility, was incapable of any low or mean action according to his belief. In *Salamander,* which Mr. Georg Brandes regards as his best *Novelle* in versified form,[2] he expresses his creed of the vigorous life, of allegiance to nature, in spite of failings and adverse judgments against him by the "naturalistic school":

> I never yet of virtue or of failing
> Have been ashamed, nor proudly did adorn
> Myself of one, nor thought my sins of veiling.
>
> Beyond all else, betwixt the nobly born
> And vulgar herd, this marks the separation,—
> The cowards whose hypocrisy we scorn.

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[2] *Creative Spirits of the Nineteenth Century* by Georg Brandes, New York, 1924.

> Him I call noble, who, with moderation,
> Carves his own honor, and but little heeds
> His neighbors' slander or their approbation.[3]

Another character, familiar to readers of Heyse, Toinette of *Kinder der Welt* (*Children of the World*) speaks words of similar trend often quoted; "There is but *one* genuine nobility; to remain true to one's self. . . . He who bears within himself the true rank, lives and dies through his own grace, and is, therefore, sovereign."

To Italy, Heyse turns for sensuous delights in many of his tales. *L'Arrabiata,* probably the best known of any of his *Novellen* by students of German in colleges and classes, written when he was twenty-three, has an interesting history.[4] Paul Heyse as a young man, and his friend, Joseph Victor Scheffel, were at an inn at Sorrento. They had been together at Capri and had planned to hold a "literary joust," to read to each other, at Sorrento, some new tale or poem. Scheffel contributed the poem, *Der Trumpeter von Gättingen*; Heyse read *L'Arrabiata.* Piquant is this tale of the maiden's love for Antonio, the boatman, and her maidenly pride and resistance to his love until the injury

[3] *Gesammelte Werke:* Vol. III, p. 300, translated in *Creative Spirits of the Nineteenth Century* (by Georg Brandes) by Rasmus B. Anderson, New York, 1924. By permission of Thomas Y. Crowell Co.

[4] Introduction by Mary A. Frost to edition of *L'Arrabiata,* published by Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1896.

to his arm and his plea to her, in memory of her mother, brings about a romantic sequel. Twenty-five years later Heyse was again at Sorrento; he sent a greeting, in rhyme, to this friend of earlier days and later life. He told him that he had seen again his model, "Laurella," on the street but she did not recognize him; she was far removed from the "madcap" of fifteen, the "cross-patch," with her youthful charm and wistful appeal. The background of this tale, against Naples and Vesuvius, is painted with that vivid photography which characterizes Heyse's scenes in drama and fiction. Unlike Balzac or Turgenieff, he wrote few words of description but "created atmosphere" that was alive. Striking examples are the familiar tales, "Barbarossa," "At the Ghost Hour" and "The Dead Lake."

In the later *Novellen,* as well as the novels and plays of other years, Heyse showed tendencies towards realism and less romanticism. On the other hand, he never lost his urge for sensuous beauty, his determination "to follow one's bent" ("sich gehen zu lassen"). He would not compel himself to irksome writing; he would yield to impulse and mood. "The real sin is against nature" was his keynote, reiterated from the short tale of "Reise nach dem Glück" ("Journey After Happiness") to the longer novels, *Kinder der Welt* (*Children of the World*) and *Im Paradiese* (*In Para-*

dise). In philosophy he has been called both fatalistic and epicurean. The conflicts between restraint and self-surrender, especially in women, are germ-ideas in such diverse writings as *L'Arrabiata, The Sabine Women* (with the heroine, Tullia) and *In Paradise,* with the forceful character of Irene. In the dialogue, in *Children of the World,* between Balder, the invalid-idealist and Franzel, the socialist-printer, the author's convictions are unfolded. Balder declares that life is full of enjoyment to him, in spite of outward sufferings, because "he can experience past and future," because he can "conjure up" all the periods of his life and find a totality, a completeness of enjoyment. So the young baron in the novel, *In Paradise,* which has been vehemently discussed for two generations, sins against his own nature and his friend and, for a time, his "inner harmony" is destroyed but after sufferings, portrayed with analytical skill, harmony is restored. The city of Munich, in its varied aspects as related to society and the arts, forms the "chorus" and subtle influence in this dramatic story.[5]

Heyse has written more than sixty dramas yet too few of them are translated adequately into English; too often they have failed in stage presentation. Many are historical; *The Sabine Women* is erotic and

[5] An excellent study of Heyse is by Professor von Klenze in *German Classics* edited by Kuno Francke, German Publication Society.

less consistent in development than *Hans Lange, Hadrian Colberg,* and *Mary of Magdala;* the last play has been translated by William Winter and by Lionel Vale. The old philologist, Zipfel, in *Colberg,* may have been modeled, in part, from Heyse's father. His speech, relating the story of Leonidas and the Persian War, reaches a climax of courage and self-sacrifice, with an application to later days of struggle between the French and Germans. In Henning, the old servant in *Hans Lange,* the author emphasizes his belief in the redemptive power of nobler nature, in spite of incentives to revenge against the young squire.

There is unevenness of workmanship among the many *Novellen. Felice,* the tale of the peasant girl who "listened to reason rather than the call of passion," is a vital expression of the author's creed of obedience to "impulse of the heart." The later tales are more keen and realistic than the photographic, romantic scenes laid in Italy and Southern Germany. Heyse became more of an analyst of all kinds of humanity, with their conflicting "impulses," but he never acquiesced in the scenes of squalor and moral slime that delighted some of his contemporaries of the "naturalistic school." By contrast, he was an idealist with a strong vein of poetry. One of his best stories of later period, *The Last Centaur,* expresses his revolt against the materialistic spirit of his age. The creature who represents

the age of myths and imagination is driven back into the wood by the evil ways and heartless gibes of the modern villages; in turn, he scorns their opposition with "an exhalted humor." It seems almost a modern version of the old tale of *Baucis and Philemon.* In another tale, *The Incurable,* the hero keeps faith in the ideal, in spite of the "rabble in kid gloves." *Die Blinden* (*The Blind*) is an appealing story, with colorful pictures of garden and ravens and flocks, and two children, Clement and Marlene, waiting with tense emotion for the doctors to restore their sight. The stern father, obsessed with his idea of "duty," is a strong character. "Nils mit der offenen Hand" is a fairy tale that defies adequate translation into English but has situations of dramatic skill, notably that of the gulls biting the rope at the execution of Nils, and the brave deed of Stina, the princess who loves Nils.

Heyse was more successful in portraying women than men. He was long called "the favorite of maidens." He had insight to see fairly and to balance well the traits of normal maidenhood—beauty, coyness, love of prowess and adventure, ardent but concealed love until the lover came to whom she would yield her "maidenly pride" ("Mädschenstoltz"). There are traces of the influence of Goethe in certain passages in *Kinder der Welt,* and such *Novellen* as *The Broiderer of Treviso, The Prodigal Son,* and *The Spell of Roth-*

enburg. In the last story, there are comments upon art, interwoven with humor and irony as the characters journey from Ausbach to Würzburg. Originality, however, marks his drama and his fiction—that "ideal conception and fine literary craftsmanship" which won for him the Nobel inscription.

Mr. Georg Brandes believes that Heyse was, primarily, a pupil of Eichendorf, as his poetry indicates.[6] The poems by Heyse are less familiar than his prose, although he wrote both epics and lyrics. "Salamander" ranks among his best long poems; "The Fury" and "The Fairy Child" are examples of his lyrics. He delighted to translate—or transpose—troubadour lays, folk songs from the Spanish and the Italian. Like Mendelssohn, to whom he has been compared in temperament, he lacked dynamic force but he was sensitive, artistic, and idealistic in his basic character.

Gerhart Hauptmann (1912)

The prize of 1912 has been awarded:

Hauptmann, Gerhart, born 1862: "principally for his rich, versatile, and prominent activity in the realm of the drama." [7]

During the quarter century since the first Nobel prize was awarded, it has happened, at intervals, that

[6] *Creative Spirits of the Nineteenth Century* by Georg Brandes, New York, 1924, Thomas Y. Crowell Co.

[7] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1912.

two representatives of the same nation but different generations, are found on the lists in literature. Thus Björnson and Hamsun, among Norwegian novelists, Echegaray and Benavente in Spanish Drama, and Heyse and Hauptmann in German literature of the imagination, are exponents of succeeding generations of thought and expression. Heyse stood for the older, more poetic and romantic forms; he decreed a philosophy of nobleness in man and contentment in life. Gerhart Hauptmann, who rèceived the prize only two years later than Heyse, in 1912, was ranked by some critics with the realists of the modern, restless type, whose criticism of society in general was world-disturbing. After 1900 the fame of Heyse had declined among the younger, more progressive writers. His award, at eighty years, revived interest in his writings, especially the *Novellen;* translations and articles about his personality were widely printed in current journals.

One of the authors whom Heyse had censured for his naturalism and depressing dramas had been Gerhart Hauptmann. When the announcement was made that the prize of 1912 was again given to a German novelist and playwright, racial pride ran high but critics of other countries asked, "How could idealism be perverted in meaning so that it would apply to the author of *Before Dawn, Lonely Lives, The Weavers* and

From an original etching by Hermann Struck. Reproduced by permission of the artist and courtesy of the New York Public Library

GERHART HAUPTMANN

Michael Kramer?" Unfairly, the name of Hauptmann was linked constantly with that of Sudermann by the most bitter malcontents with this award. Such an attitude was biassed and unjust. That Hauptmann has written some of the most photographic, haunting dramas of industrial strife and social vices is true; but it is as true that he has produced two, possibly three, of the really poetic, symbolic plays in modern German literature—*The Assumption of Hannele, The Sunken Bell,* and *Parsival.*

There are two distinctive, but not wholly contradictory, personalities in Hauptmann as he reveals himself to his readers. It was as author of *The Sunken Bell,* especially, that he was chosen for the Nobel prize; it had certain autobiographical suggestions of this conflict between the material and the spiritual in the nature of its author. Recognizing that he is often associated with Sudermann, the brilliant, relentless novelist and dramatist, it is interesting to find these two writers well differentiated by Otto Heller in *Studies in Modern German Literature* (Boston, 1905). He compares the nervous, sensitive mind of Hauptmann, "possessed of a reproductive, feminine talent," in contrast with the masculine personality of Sudermann, less subtle, more virile and coarse, with broader knowledge of life but lacking the intuitive perceptions of Hauptmann. One may question some of these adjectives used by

Mr. Heller, but the general contrast is well phrased, especially as applied to the poetic dramas by Hauptmann, like *The Sunken Bell, And Pippa Dances,* and *Parsival.*

Before Hauptmann conceived any of this work that entitles him to rank among the idealists, he had written grim tragedies, similar in trend to those by Ibsen, Zola, Tolstoy, Max Nordau, and Arno Holz. As realist he has been censured as weak in plots and sometimes strained in his social tenets: there are such defects in *The Beaver Coat, Rose Bernd,* and *The Conflagration.* That he had a poetic instinct, a true lyric quality, was acknowledged from occasional lines in such gloomy plays as *Lonely Lives, Colleague Crampton,* and *The Weavers.* Among the plays of industrial upheaval and suffering, *The Weavers* has tense feeling, with lines of irony and suppressed aspirations. It was dedicated to Robert Hauptmann, father of the author, in affectionate words that express the source of its inspiration and the allegiance of Gerhart Hauptmann to his forefathers: "You, dear father, know what feelings lead me to dedicate this work to you, and I am not called upon to analyze them here. Your stories of my grandfather, who in his young days sat at the loom, a poor weaver like those here depicted, contained the germ of my drama. Whether it possesses the vigor of life or is rotten

at the core, it is the best 'so poor a man as Hamlet is,' can offer."

While this grandfather had been a poor weaver, he met with better fortunes in later life, and the father of Gerhart Hauptmann was owner of three hotels. The boy was born at Salzbrunn, a seaside town in Silesia, in 1862; thus he was thirty-two years younger than Heyse—a full generation in time and standards of literature. His mother was "one of the people." The boy was inclined to study sculpture and he was sent to art schools in Breslau, Jena, and in Italy. He was a slow pupil; his brother, Carl, seemed almost the only person who expressed faith in his gifts or future success. With his art studies he combined agriculture and history. After a brief apprenticeship as modeler, he decided that he would be an actor; he had a lisp that interfered with the continuance of this histrionic hope. He married a woman of wealth and moved to Berlin, in 1885, where he became identified with "The Free Stage" movement and began to write plays. Byron had been one of his earlier literary heroes; in *The Fate of the Children of Prometheus,* he recorded some impressions of travel along the same route as *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.*

In 1889 "The Free Stage Society" was formed in Berlin; it was, in a way, "an imitation of Antoine's Free Theatre, organized two years before," says

Barrett H. Clark in *A Study of the Modern Drama.*[8] Among the founders were Otto Brahm, Maximilian Harden, Theodor Wolff and others who wished to produce plays of varied types, especially the work of naturalistic writers. Hauptmann came under the influences of Bruno Wille, the socialist, and Arno Holz, the dramatist; certain reactions from this companionship of minds may be traced in his plays *Before Dawn, Colleague Crampton,* and *Florian Geyer.* Brahm was the director of this Free Stage Society which, in 1894, after fulfilling its mission for Germany, was merged into the Deutsches Theatre. Among the plays by Hauptmann written under this stimulus, in addition to the three mentioned above, were *The Festival of Peace, Lonely Lives, The Weavers, The Beaver Coat,* and *The Assumption of Hannele. Before Dawn,* written in the Silesian mountains and staged in Berlin, in 1889, was a haunting tragedy with loose construction. The ribald father and his low associates, and the daughter, who kills herself to escape assault at their hands, combine to make a gripping, repulsive story with certain dramatic possibilities that are not fulfilled.

The Weavers showed progress in technic and characterization of a group. Here no single individual plays the leading part; the group of weavers, the mob at the time of crisis, are the principal actors. There are

[8] D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1925.

marked contrasts in setting between the home of the rich capitalist and the poverty of the weavers, between the government's indifference and the industrial slavery of the victims of rapacity. One of the most poignant passages is the monologue of old Ansorge, in Act II; he cannot believe that the King will fail to help them, if word is sent to him of their needs. When Jaeger assures him it is futile, that the rich people are as "cunning as the devil," his lament for the home that must be sacrificed, where his father sat at the loom for more than forty years, is pathetic and dramatic.

The Assumption of Hannele, which appeared in 1893 and had a germ-idea not unlike that of *Before Dawn,* created sharp discussion in Germany. There was protest against its performance. The next year it was brought to the United States, to be staged at the Fifth Avenue Theatre in New York. It was translated into English by William Archer and by Charles Henry Meltzer. Reformers of many kinds denounced the play without a hearing. They threatened the author, who had come to this country to see the performance and to advise with his publisher, with arrest; the same fate was to fall upon the translator, Charles Henry Meltzer, and the actress who was to play the leading rôle. "Some representatives of the press, with critics and authors, were bidden to a private per-

formance and the next day the newspapers, with a few impenitent exceptions, published eulogies of *Hannele!* No one was arrested. And the public performance took place." [9]

The American translator of both *The Assumption of Hannele* and *The Sunken Bell,* Mr. Charles Henry Meltzer, has described Hauptmann at this period, in the Foreword to *The Sunken Bell.* He had expected to meet an aggressive, self-satisfied man. On the contrary, he found one who seemed like a student, with shy, boyish manners; he might have been classified as a curate or a teacher; "A painful, introspective, hunted earnestness was stamped upon his face—the face of a thinker, a dreamer, a genius" (Foreword). *Hannele* was not a success theatrically in New York. *The Weavers,* at the Irving Place Theatre, attracted somewhat more attention but the time was too indifferent to such plays in America; one could not forecast the cordial reception for problem plays and grim tragedies, with mystic elements, three decades later.

It was eighteen years before the Swedish Academy gave world recognition and honor to Hauptmann. A few men and women of literary insight—or foresight—proclaimed a future for the creator of such a

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[9] *The Sunken Bell:* a Fairy Play in Five Acts by Gerhart Hauptmann, freely rendered into English verse by Charles Henry Meltzer, New York, 1913, Foreword. By permission of Doubleday, Page & Co.

"dream-poem" as *Hannele.* Gradually, readers became interested and stirred by this strange play based upon the weird apparitions of the fevered brain of the little waif, the poetic chorus of the angels, the comfort of her mother and Pastor Gottwald, in contrast with the terrifying fear of her father's return, the stormy December evening in this mountain almshouse, and the poems of "The Stranger" which cast a spell of religious peace upon the reader, as the mystic, green light fell upon the face of dying Hannele. This "dream-poem," as Hauptmann called it, won for him the Grillparzer prize in Germany. Two years later, after the failure of *Florian Geyer* to win plaudits of dramatic critics, he wrote another play of symbolism and anapestic meters, combining the realities of life with mystic allurements, and he called it "A Fairy-Tale Play," *Die versunkene Glocke.* His most severe critics were convinced of his lyrical quality and dramatic power.

The basic material for this play, *The Sunken Bell,* says its translator, Mr. Meltzer, is found in Grimm's Teutonic Mythology. Here are the characters of the bell maker, his wife, the elfish spirit, the schoolmaster and the vicar, and other factors interwoven with the allegorical and mystical. Hauptmann visualized these characters with consummate skill. Heinrich, the bell forger, who seeks the sun and a new, marvellous chime

of bells, Magda, his faithful wife eager to free him from domestic toils, Rautendelein, the spirit of nature that lures him away and stirs his soul to unfulfilled aspirations, and Wittikin, the wise woman, the village priest and barber—all are alive and convincing. The evasive and mystical element becomes a part of the atmosphere of this "fairy-tale play"; the dramatic unities are well maintained.

What is the meaning of *The Sunken Bell?* Each reader may make his own answer, for several are possible. It is as futile to analyze it, as it is to destroy the fantasy and mystery of *Peter Pan* or *The Blue Bird* or *Dear Brutus*. It is too subtle, too delicate to be treated by rigid rules of criticism. However, Mr. Meltzer makes three pertinent explanations; it may be a parable, the effort of all artists to reach their ideals; it may be the effort of a reformer to remold society by visionary ambitions; or Heinrich may embody any human being, striving for the goal of truth and light. As Rautendelein symbolizes Nature which offers freedom, so Wittikin expresses the eternal philosophy of life, opposed to the conventional creeds of the world, like those of the barber and the vicar, that are stumbling-blocks in the path of lofty idealism. Heinrich fails to attain his ideal; he cannot weld the pagan and Christian truths into one gospel, because he is *human,* with limitations. He cannot stay on the

pinnacle of the mountain, with its mystic light and its new sun-bells, but he has not lost the influence of these in his life. When the vicar rejoices that "the old Heinrich" has returned, he answers:

> That man am I, and yet . . . another man.
> Open the windows—Light and God stream in.[10]

This play proved a moderate success, especially when played by Sothern, and has been repeated in academic circles, although it has not been so popular in America as have been the plays by Ibsen, Rostand, and Maeterlinck. It is one of the dramas that yields more of its beauty and symbolic message to the reader than to the spectator. The play, *Henry of Aue,* or *Der arme Heinrich,* which was called a fable (1902) has sometimes been listed as a sequel to *The Sunken Bell* but they are unlike in setting and theme. Heinrich, the crusader, is attacked with leprosy at the summit of his glory—a punishment for his insolence to God. The healing begins when he purges his soul of despair and hatred and begins to recognize "Beneficence" in Nature and Life. There are well drawn characters, especially Heinrich, Hartmann von Aue, Gottfried, Brigitta, and Ottegebe, the farmer's daughter, whose influence is strong in the "cure" for the hero. As dramatic art

[10] *The Sunken Bell* by Gerhart Hauptmann, freely rendered into English verse by Charles Henry Meltzer, New York, 1913, Act III. By permission of Doubleday, Page & Co.

this play is inferior to *Hannele* or *The Sunken Bell,* but the reader's interest is sustained in the leading character, from his tragic condition as an outcast, with a wooden clapper to warn people of his approach, to the last scene of his redemption by love.

During the years since he received the Nobel prize, Hauptmann has written several plays and novels that continue to reveal his dual traits as realist and idealist. The writings during the World War have a tang of bitterness. Ludwig Lewisohn has edited eight volumes of Hauptmann's *Dramatic Works* (Huebsch, New York, 1915–1925). The introductions are informing and the translations are clear and strong. In the series are included several Social and Domestic Plays as well as "Symbolic and Legendary Dramas." *Parsival,* a play translated by Oakley Williams, has an ethical or religious tone with sympathetic insight into humanity. "Heartache" was the name of Parsival's mother; said her creator, "I should hate to make anyone sad, but I believe we might call every mother, at any rate, very, very, many mothers by this name." [11] There are symbolism and poetic sermonizing in this drama of Parsival, "Bearer of Burdens"; his development from a care-free youth to later responsibilities for world burdens is well portrayed. Traces

[11] *Parsival,* a play by Gerhart Hauptmann, translated by Oakley Williams, New York, 1915. By permission of The Macmillan Co.

of irony and humor are found. The setting of the play, *And Pippa Dances,* is picturesque, in the Silesian mountains. Wann is a grotesque element and the tales of "the Wild Huntsman" are entertaining; Pippa, the fair-haired daughter of the glass blower, is the persuasive character. There is a lack of dramatic unity in certain scenes. Translations of this play, and of *Elga,* have been made by Mary Harned in *Poet Lore* (Boston, 1906–1909). *And Pippa Dances* is included in Volume V of the plays edited by Mr. Lewisohn.

Among interesting, intensive studies of Hauptmann as dramatist, is the thesis by Walter H. P. Trumbaeur, on *Gerhart Hauptmann and John Galsworthy; a Parallel* (University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1917).[12] The parallelism is traced, with occasional excess of effort, between their careers, their themes, and certain plays like *Hannele* and *The Little Dream, Michael Kramer* and *A Bit o' Love,* and *The Weavers* and *Strife.* Both dramatists, says the critic, seek to escape social bondage; both are vitally concerned in social problems; both are realists temperamentally; both have a purpose to enlighten rather than to delight; both see moral values and, also, *the irony of things.* Hauptmann is more interested in characters while Galsworthy's main interest lies in the *relations* between

[12] By permission of the University of Pennsylvania Press.

characters. In both writers, there is a strain of idealism, seeking *truth,* material and spiritual. Another interesting thesis is by Mary Ayres Quimby, on *Nature Background in the Dramas of Gerhart Hauptmann* (University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1918). Among later plays *A Winter Ballad* and *The Festival Play* register the fearless assault of this dramatist upon vices and the exaltation of an idealism which is "union with Nature."

The best work of Hauptmann in fiction has been attracting attention and becoming familiar to English readers. *The Fool in Christ: Emanuel Quint* has been translated by Thomas Seltzer (Huebsch, 1911); *Atlantis,* translated by Adele and Thomas Seltzer (1912), and *Phantom* and *The Heretic of Soana,* both translated by Bayard Quincy Morgan (1922–1923). The characterizations are forceful, with humor that is sometimes broad and, again, subtle. Daring satire and exposition of modern social problems are qualities that arrest the interest of the reader and attest the brilliant mind of the writer, in the recent, neo-romantic novel, *The Island of the Great Mother,* translated this year by Willa and Edwin Muir (Huebsch). The leaders in this "Women's State" are delineated with shrewd, ironical skill. Phaon, the solitary "masculine" on the island, passes through strange adventures before he reaches maturity and finds his "ideal woman." In

his keen, illumining analysis of Hauptmann's poetic plays, *Hannele* and *The Sunken Bell,* in *A Study of the Modern Drama* (New York, 1925), Barrett H. Clark accepts the statement of other critics that these are not "well-made plays," but he finds in them the qualities which are high lights in this writer's masterpieces—"psychological interest, dramatic as distinguished from purely lyrical poetry, a fairly well constructed plot and an atmosphere of beauty." [13]

[13] P. 82. By permission of D. Appleton & Co.

CHAPTER IX

MAETERLINCK—BELGIAN SYMBOLIST AND POET-PLAYWRIGHT (1911)

The prize of 1911 has been awarded:

Maeterlinck, Maurice, born 1862: "because of his many-sided literary activity and especially because of his dramatic creations which are marked by wealth of fancy and poetic idealism that sometimes, in the fairy play's veiled form, reveals deep inspiration and, also, in a mysterious way, appeals to the reader's feeling and imagination." [1]

The first decade of the Nobel prizes was over and a new group of candidates was coming into the literary limelight in 1911. There was hopeful speculation that the award might go to either Russia or America, the two larger countries that have not yet been included. There was, however, a new type of poetry and drama, and a writer of unique personality, that were attracting widespread interest—namely, the mystical and symbolic plays by Maurice Maeterlinck. The announcement that he was the winner for 1911 caused much pride to the little kingdom of Belgium. Maeterlinck wrote most of his plays in French so they

[1] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1911.

By courtesy of Dodd, Mead & Co.

MAURICE MAETERLINCK

gained readers more quickly than those of his Belgian predecessors and contemporaries. *On the Scent,* the drama by Charles Van Lerberghe, has been compared to Maeterlinck's earlier work by Barrett H. Clark in *A Study of the Modern Drama.*[2] Other Belgian playwrights commended by Mr. Clark are Henri Maubel and Edmond Picard.

Maeterlinck was not quite fifty years old when the Nobel honor came to him. He was born in Ghent, in 1862, of good ancestry. He recalled the surroundings of his early life—the gardens and the sea and the ships in sight. Especially was he interested in the Flemish peasants as they sat, in quiet, stolid attitudes, in the doorways of their cottages or by the smoking lamps. One group impressed his boyhood memory, as he saw them on his way from school—seven toothless brothers and a sister. Their lethargy and inert lives awakened him, in young manhood, to psychological curiosity; their strange traditions and unreasoning fears are reflected in some of his plays. His father was anxious to have him study law, so he read and practised for a little time in Ghent—long enough "to lose a case or two," he said with humorous reminiscence. He spent seven years at a Jesuit College, and showed a mind of philosophical trend. He thought that in Paris he might come into contact with men of

[2] New York, 1925, p. 161.

literary rank and scholars. Villiers was his especial influence there; another inspirational friend was Octave Mirabeau to whom Maeterlinck dedicated his first published plays, *Princess Maleine* and *Pelléas and Mélisande.* In too extravagant praise Mirabeau hailed Maeterlinck as "the Belgian Shakespeare" and Maeterlinck became the victim of flattery, on one hand, and ridicule on the other. He bore himself with calm dignity then as he has all his life; his serene manner and low voice, in contrast with his muscular physique, have been noted by many acquaintances.

Before the death of his father, in 1889, he returned to Belgium and lived there for seven years, continuing his studies of nature and metaphysics, writing marionette plays, and more serious dramas, and making translations from authors of other tongues, including English, that left impressions upon his mind. He declared that the three writers who exerted the strongest influence during these formative years were Emerson, Novalis, and Ruysbroeck, the medieval mystic whose writings were translated by Maeterlinck when he was a student at the Jesuit College. To visitors from America he delights to show his worn copy of Emerson. In his collected studies, *On Emerson and Other Essays,* translated by Montrose J. Moses, he summarizes the Concord philosopher's thoughts about "the greatness

of man's spiritual nature, about the forces of the soul." In conclusion of his vital influence, he writes: "Emerson has come to affirm simply this equal and secret grandeur of our life. He has encompassed us with silence and with wonder. He has placed a shaft of light beneath the feet of the workman as he leaves the workshop. He has shown us all the powers of heaven and earth, at the same time intent on sustaining the threshold on which two neighbors speak of the rain that falls or the wind that blows. And above these two passers-by who accost each other, he has made us see the countenance of God who smiles with the countenance of God. He is nearer than any other to our common life. He is the most attentive, the most assiduous, the most honest, the most scrupulous, and probably the most human of guides. He is the sage of commonplace days, and commonplace days are, in sum, the substance of our being." [3]

In 1896 Maeterlinck returned to Paris and there he has made his home. He refused to renounce his Belgian citizenship, however, that he might become a member of the French Academy; during the war he did valiant service in many ways for his native country. In his home town to-day, and at Brussels, the visitor

[3] *On Emerson and Other Essays* by Maurice Maeterlinck, translated by Montrose J. Moses, New York, 1912. By permission of Dodd, Mead & Co.

is told of Belgian pride in Maeterlinck; the people say, "You know he has lived in Paris almost all his life but he is a true patriot, just the same." To the years in Belgium, between 1889 and 1896, belong such plays as *The Blind, The Intruder, The Seven Princesses, Alladine and Palomides* and *The Death of Tintagiles.* It is a question whether he has surpassed, in dramatic vigor combined with mystic beauty, that play of earlier period, *Pelléas and Mélisande.* Like the story of *Paolo and Francesca,* which it resembles in theme, it has an appealing quality both on the stage and in the book. The tragic death of Mélisande, after the murder of her lover and the birth of her daughter, reflects a high-light of dramatic power. The lines are simple in diction, masterly in structure and suggestion.

One of the first translators of Maeterlinck into English was Richard Hovey, the brilliant American poet who died in his prime. In two decorative volumes, first issued in Chicago (Stone & Kimball) in 1894–1896, he interpreted, as well as translated, these earlier plays already cited. The Introduction in the first volume is informing for all students of modern drama. Mr. Hovey defined Symbolism, as distinguished from Realism and Expressionism; he joined with the name of Maeterlinck, such other exponents of Symbolism as Mallarmé, Gilbert Parker, and Bliss

Carman. Two traits distinguished the Belgian from other symbolists of his day, according to this interpreter—"the peculiarity of his technique, and the limitation of his emotional range." The use of reiteration is cited as a French characteristic for effective emphasis. "The danger-border between the tragic and the ridiculous" is a menace to Maeterlinck. More true of his earlier than his later plays is another restriction noted by Mr. Hovey: "His master-tone is always terror—terror, too, of one type—that of the churchyard. . . . He is the poet of the sepulchre, like Poe—as masterly in his own methods as Poe was in his, and destined, perhaps, to exert the same wide influence." [4] *Premonition* plays a large part in the plays of Maeterlinck from *The Blind* and *Home* to *Joyzelle.*

In Paris, under the stimulus of literary associates and the comradeship of Georgette Le Blanc (the actress who became his wife), Maeterlinck wrote three plays that register his dramatic climax—*Joyzelle, Monna Vanna* (1903) and *The Blue Bird* (1908). Probably, the last symbolic drama was the primal cause of the Nobel award. The idealism, the delicate fancy, the imaginative charm, the fascinating characters in every scene, real or fantastic, and the pervasive message for

[4] *The Plays of Maurice Maeterlinck,* translated by Richard Hovey, Chicago, 1894–96.

every age and land, give to this play a perennial appeal. As Maeterlinck affirmed, this play, like others of the type, may lose some of its "mystic transparency" and symbolism on the stage but it has been alluring both as acted play and as a film. Why there should have been "a sequel" to such a perfect, complete play as *The Blue Bird* is a question that has troubled many a critic. Resentment against *The Betrothal,* the continuance of this fairy-tale play, however, gives way before appreciation of its fine passages and strong message. At the same time, the impression lingers that Tyltyl, like Peter Pan, should "never have grown up." Alexander Teixeira de Mattos has made a fine translation of *The Betrothal* and Edith Wynne Mattison was a charming "Fairy Berylune," when the play was given in New York. Here Maeterlinck ventured almost too near the borderland between fantasy and farce, especially in Act II, where the girls, who would marry Tyltyl, reveal their lower natures.

The versatility of Maeterlinck is evidenced by comparing such plays, within ten years, as *Joyzelle* and *The Blue Bird, Monna Vanna* and *Mary Magdalene. Joyzelle* has elements of dramatic ecstasy with a tragic undertone. Professor William Lyon Phelps has summarized well the salient qualities of this play and its heroine in *Essays on Modern Dramatists* (New York,

1921). *Monna Vanna,* written especially for Maeterlinck's wife, is a rare blend of intense emotionalism and convincing characters with a crisis which challenges the reason. Giovanna, or Monna Vanna, wife of Guido Colonna, commander of the garrison at Pisa, will remain as Maeterlinck's most vital heroine. Prinzivalle, general of the Florentines and her boyhood lover, is an idealized hero for his age but convincing in his chivalry. Medieval atmosphere and dramatic action accentuate the strong dialogue of this play. Ten years later, in 1913, appeared *Mary Magdalene.* In his Introduction, Maeterlinck relates, with some feeling, his effort to win cordial response from Paul Heyse, who had written a play on the same theme and with certain situations that the Belgian wished to use. Meeting with a refusal, "none too courteous I regret to say," he decided to take his privilege of using Biblical words and his previously conceived situation. He gives to Mary Magdalene a few masterly lines; to Joseph of Arimethea, she says, "We save those whom we love; we listen to them afterwards." To the Roman Verus, who would have her save Jesus by yielding herself to him, she replies: "I should perhaps sin against all that he loves, to save what I love. I could save him in spite of himself; but no longer in spite of myself. If I bought his life at the price which you offer, all that he wished, all that he loved,

would be dead. I cannot plunge the flame into the mire to save the lamp." [5]

The war left deep scars upon Maeterlinck's spirit; they are reflected in such essays and plays as *The Wrack of the Storm, Belgium at War, The Burgomaster at Stilemonde, The Cloud that Lifted,* and *The Power of the Dead.* Some of the essays, or chapters, in the book first mentioned, deal with psychometry, the interest which is expanded in other books like *The Great Secret, Our Eternity, The Unknown Guest,* and *The Light Beyond.* That man is the product of unseen forces, that he is molded by "hidden powers," that humanity and nature are always closely linked, were tenets that underlay such books as *Treasure of the Humble, Life and Flowers,* and *The Life of the Bee.* He became a beekeeper that he might study at first-hand the traits of these workers and apply their analogy to humanity—much as Dallas Lore Sharp has done more recently in *The Spirit of the Hive.* In the beehives and the garden, Maeterlinck finds the same complications and conflicts, the same "domination of the spirit of the race," as among men. In an essay in his earlier book, *Treasure of the Humble,* he expressed a surety which has been verified with the pass-

[5] *Mary Magdalene* by Maurice Maeterlinck, translated by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos, New York, 1910, Act IV. By permission of Dodd, Mead & Co.

ing of the years: "A time may come perhaps—and many things herald its approach—a time will come, perhaps, when our souls will know each other without the intermediary of the senses."

To penetrate beyond the tangible things of life requires courage but brings light to the spirit. In his plays, *Ariadne and Blue Beard* and *Sister Beatrice,* translated by Bernard Miall into English verse (1916), and *The Miracle of Saint Anthony,* translated by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos (1918), Maeterlinck has suggested the neglected but magic "key" which may gain for us new adventures into "the prohibitions of the tangible world." The *premonition* of his earlier plays has become the *intuition* which penetrates the unknown and supernatural. Life has been symbolized by him as "a garden," as an "inner temple," as analogous to the world of plants and "the swarm" of the bees. He seldom reveals passionate feeling in his writings, but he exemplifies search for truth, "care for moral stoic beauty."[6] Intuition, as interpreted by Bergson, he has expanded into the "raison mystique" by which one may penetrate the unknown and the mystic. There are shades of gloom and sadness in many of his plays; his characters are sometimes weak in conflict with the forces about them; there are hints

[6] *Some Modern Belgian Writers* by Turquet Milnes, New York, 1917.

of fatalism in plays like *The Intruder, The Death of Tintagiles,* and *Interior,* but the keynote of Maeterlinck, in his maturity, has been that of spiritual progress and mystic idealism.

CHAPTER X

RABINDRANATH TAGORE: BENGALESE MYSTIC-POET

The prize for the year 1913 has been awarded:

Rabindranath Tagore, born 1861: "For reason of the inner depth and the high aim revealed in his poetic writings; also for the brilliant way in which he translates the beauty and freshness of his Oriental thought into the accepted forms of Western *belles-lettres*." [1]

As a Bengalese, Rabindranath Tagore, to whom the Nobel prize was given in 1913, is a British subject. Thus, for the second time, the honor came to Great Britain through the writings of one whose formative years, like those of Kipling, had been spent in India and whose typical writings were associated with that country. On the contrary, the words and thoughts of this mystic-poet are so exotic, sometimes so unlocalized in form and spirit, that they belong to world literature, rather than to a distinctive country. Possibly no other prize winner has been so idealistic, so international in his appeal as this author of *The Gardener, Sadhana,* and *The King of the Dark Chamber.*

[1] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1913.

In his biographical study,[2] Ernest Rhys suggests that the award was given to Tagore because of the enthusiasm of a Swedish Orientalist for his writings before they were known in English. The year before the award, however, Yeats had praised the poems of Tagore [3] and other poet-critics had found him an inspirational influence. To the winner, the announcement gave mingled gratitude and regret; the latter he expressed in his sentence, "They have taken away my refuge." [4] His life had been so untouched by external struggles that he was, in truth, "a child of Nature." In *My Reminiscences,* he writes: "From my earliest years I enjoyed a simple and intimate communion with Nature. Each one of the cocoanut trees in our garden had for me a distinct personality. . . . On opening my eyes every morning, the blithely awakening world used to call me to join it like a playmate." [5]

Born in Calcutta, May 6, 1861, he came into a rare inheritance for his later work as religious leader and writer. Like all children of the higher social classes in India, he was environed from his birth with poetic atmosphere. His blessing, as a newborn babe, was

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[2] *Rabindranath Tagore* by Ernest Rhys, New York, 1915.

[3] *Gitanjali,* with Introduction by W. B. Yeats, London and New York, 1913.

[4] *Rabindranath Tagore: a Biographical Study* by Ernest Rhys, New York, 1915, Preface, xiv. By permission of the Macmillan Co.

[5] *My Reminiscences* by Rabindranath Tagore, New York, 1917, p. 225. By permission of the Macmillan Co.

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RABINDRANATH TAGORE

spoken in verse; as he grew older many of his studies were in poetic form. The family name was Thakur, Anglicized into Tagore; his father and grandfathers had been identified with education and civil reforms. Raja Sir Sourindra Mohun Tagore was founder of the Bengal Music School; another, Abanindranath Tagore, was a noted painter and leader in art-movements. His father might have been a Maharaja (a great king) but he preferred to be Maharshi (a great sage), thus he was more closely linked with the people than with nobility. He insisted upon paying debts which his father, a prince, had left. He would have made himself a pauper but the creditors refused to accept such sacrifices, so he had a certain amount of property. He devoted himself to spiritual teachings and traveled through India on such missions, gaining the respect of all classes.

The son who won this Nobel prize was the youngest in a family of seven brothers and three sisters. He was lonely as a child, for his mother died when he was young and he was often left with men-servants for days. The return of his father marked the "gala-days"— *his* presence pervaded the whole house. Nature was the boy's comrade and he would often dig with a bamboo stick in the ground to find any possible "mysteries." Perfumes affected his senses and left vivid memories, as he tells in his *Reminiscences*. The

school life, after he was six years, was a brief period of unhappiness. He was, perhaps, stubborn to a degree and was ranked as the lowest in his class because he refused to answer orally, but he thought out problems so well, in written work, that he amazed his teachers and was given first place. The Oriental Seminary, the Normal School, the Bengal Academy—all seemed to him "prison-houses." At home he studied, with a tutor, history, sciences, and English literature. At first, he laughed, somewhat scornfully, at English poetry because of the unusual sounds.

An influence of this formative age was his nephew —older than he was, Jyotiprokash, who read *Hamlet* to the lad and urged him to write verses and poetic imaginings. He saw a future for this boy with his fancies and love of Nature. A teacher at the Normal School, also, inspired him to write, asking him to complete lines or stanzas which had been begun by another. Although his father was often separated from the boy, he realized the child's promise and his sensitive nature; he gave him a vacation trip into the Himalayas, stopping at Bolpur, the Peace Cottage, where his father often retired and where the son was to have his own home later. In his "blue blank-book," that he carried always with him, were written poems suggested by scenery and incidents of this trip. His father taught him botany and astronomy, as well as

English, Sanskrit, and Bengali. Back in Calcutta he "played truant from school," sometimes, and caused his older sister to write in despair of the fulfillment of their hopes for him; that he would be "the only unsuccessful man in the family.[6] For a year he went to London to study law but he was homesick and returned to Bengal.

In his *Reminiscences* at fifty, he recalled the years between sixteen and twenty-three as those of unrest and "extreme wildness." He was the victim of the impulses of strong, young manhood; for a time he was an epicure rather than a mystic. He delighted in silk robes and luscious foods and romances in love. An expression of this time may be found in the poem, "The Gleaming Vision of Youth," in *The Gardener.* Other reflections are in *Sandhya Sangit* and *The Songs of Sunrise,* more philosophical. Two poems, "The Eternity of Life" and "The Eternity of Death," indicate the period of transition from this time to the years of religious meditation. At twenty-three he married happily; at the request of his father, he went to oversee the family estate at Shilaida, on the Ganges. Here, with intervals of travel, he remained for seventeen years, living close to the people and to Nature, and writing some of his tales and poems. One of his

[6] *Rabindranath Tagore* by Basanta Koomar Roy, New York, 1915, p. 52.

most famous love poems, showing mingled sensuous and spiritual strains, is "The Beloved at Noon and in the Morning."

In a house boat on the Padma he often spent hours of meditation, long evenings of reverie, that were pictured in the background of his idyllic song, "Golden Bengal." He studied the poverty, trials, and simple idealism of the people; he knew elementary medicine and cared for the sick; he was saddened by the loss of rice crops in destructive rains; he was determined that tenants should not suffer unduly from tax-gatherers. He brought upon himself the jealous criticism of British magistrates in the district and was called a revolutionary and visionary disturber. He had already formulated his ideas of both a small republic and the school at Bolpur when he was interrupted in his plans by domestic sorrows. He journeyed to England and the United States for recuperation and inspiration.

The first grief was the death of his wife for whom he had a deep love. Within a few months his daughter died of tuberculosis. Shortly afterwards came another poignant sorrow in the loss of his youngest son. With the serenity of a mind that recognizes Nature as mother and friend, he turned toward more intimate relations with spiritual and religious thoughts. These are revealed especially in *Gitanjali,* the first book by

which he became well known to English readers. It was written in English with vigor and grace, with distinctive structure. In 1912–13 he came to the United States, partly for a change of scene, partly to add to his knowledge of industrial improvements and agricultural equipment, that he might apply this information in his school at Bolpur. His older son was with him, to learn methods of harvesting. In his biographical study of Tagore, Basanta Koomar Roy [7] tells interesting facts about the visit to this poet and discussion, with him, of the possibilities that he might win the Nobel prize. He was then at Urbana, Illinois, with his son. He was impressed with the sunshine of our climate—"enchanted American days" he called them. He liked the superior engineering and business abilities of Americans but he deplored their lack of culture. He was urged to translate more of his writings into English and was assured that, should he win the Nobel prize, it would increase international brotherhood and world peace, as well as raise India among the nations. Sceptical of the probability he said, should it come to him, he would use the money to start an industrial department in his school at Bolpur.

Ten months later the award was made to Tagore. Some of his compatriots were his most severe critics, complaining that he "dabbled" in too many forms of

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 189–193.

literature. He admitted the charge but averred that poetry represented "the deep truth" of his life. As a poet he has revived the work, in kind, of the Vaishnava poets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, of mystic writers like the Upanishads who lived between 2000 and 1000 B. C. He adapted the beauties of these poets to modern interpretation. He was indebted, also, to Kabir, the mystic of the fifteenth century, and to Ramprosad of Bengal, of the eighteenth. In his form and spiritual progress he has shown marked originality, following the work of Bengalese like Raja Ram Mohun Roy and Bankim, who had cleared away many obstacles of British domination over native expression.

Much has been written about the school at Bolpur to which, true to his promise, he has devoted funds from his award. In his essays, *Sadhana, or the Realization of Life,* are found several of the "student addresses" made here; the war caused changed conditions and frustrated some of the founder's hopes. This school was started in 1902, approved by his father, and with the goal, "To revive the spirit of our ancient system of education . . . to make the students feel that there is a higher and a nobler thing in life than practical efficiency." At first, such a venture met with curiosity and some scorn. Parents sent here unmanageable or backward boys. They had simple sur-

roundings and lived and slept outdoors; they sang chants as the birds begin their morning songs; they had time for individual prayer and thought, clad in white silk robes. They enjoyed games and long walks, simple food, no wine or meat, music in the evening and plays, written by Rabindranath Tagore; they wrote and illustrated school papers. There was self-government and close, brotherly relations between boys and teachers. Their scholastic work became satisfactory to the University at Calcutta. The boys were happy, often refusing to go home for their vacations, unless compelled to do so by their parents.

In addition to his work as educator for boys, Rabindranath Tagore has been a strong influence for more training and freedom for the women of India. He believes that the life of woman, in a generic sense, is more full and harmonious than that of man. He found the ideas of both Hindu teachers and Christian missionaries were extreme, as he viewed them, but he advocated education and broadened opportunities. As an Oriental he has poetized the love of the home, the coming of the woman at the end of the day, "with a pitcher of nectar," to bring comfort to the home. His poetic play, *Chitra,* much discussed and puzzling in passages to a Western mind, is a frank exposition of his philosophy regarding the sensuous and spiritual

qualities of women. Other expressions are in *The Home and the World* (1919) and *Personality* (1917) and in plays like *Sanyas,* and *The King and the Queen* (in *Sacrifice and Other Plays,* New York, 1917). That he is a lover of children, and able to interpret their thoughts and fancies with unmatched beauty, is evident to all readers of Sir Rabindranath Tagore's writings (he was knighted in 1915). His own simplicity of nature and life, his imagination in its purity and freedom, make him an intimate comrade for boys and girls. The year after he received the Nobel prize, the original, unrhymed poems, *The Crescent Moon,* were translated, with effective illustrations in color. *Stray Birds,* with frontispiece in color by Willy Pogany (1921), is another appealing and typical book, but more mature and philosophical.

The periods of childhood, from babyhood to school days and letter-writing, are unfolded in *The Crescent Moon* in delightful pictures. Especially intuitive are "Baby's World," "Paper Boats," "The Little Big Man," and "The First Jasmines." Humor enlivens many of these fancies and questions of the child, as in "Twelve O'Clock" and "Authorship"; the latter raises a query—*why* the mother allows father to waste "heaps of paper" without a protest, while a single sheet, taken for a paper boat, may bring a remon-

strance to the child. There is emotional beauty and Oriental philosophy in "The Beginning." "Where have I come from?" asks the child, and the mother:

She answered half crying, half laughing, and clasping the baby to her breast,—
You were hidden in my heart as its desire, my darling. . . .
In all my hopes and my loves, in my life, in the life of my mother you have lived.
In the lap of the deathless Spirit who rules our home you have been nursed for ages. . . .
As I gaze on your face, mystery overwhelms me; you who belong to all have become mine.[8]

During the twelve years since the Nobel award, Tagore has translated several of his earlier poems, plays and tales and has written *My Reminiscences,* one of the most illumining autobiographies of the last decade. He has expanded his ideas on government, education and religion in books like *Nationalism* and *Creative Unity.* He has written *Prayers for Mother India*—that she may be raised from her chronic want to a place of influence and success. He has urged united action by the people of England and those of India to bring about this material union. He has said, "One section of the human race cannot be permanently strong by depriving another section of its inherent

[8] *The Crescent Moon: Child-Poems* by Rabindranath Tagore, translated from the original Bengali by the author, New York, 1913, 1916. By permission of the Macmillan Co.

rights." Taking as his text that mooted line from Kipling,

> Oh, East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet—

Tagore said, at a banquet in London: "I have learned that, though our tongues are different and our habits dissimilar, at the bottom of our hearts we are one. . . . East is East and West is West—God forbid that it should be otherwise—but the twain must meet in amity, peace and mutual understanding; their meeting will be all the more fruitful because of their differences; it must lead both to holy wedlock before the common altar of Humanity."

In the sympathetic, analytical study of *Mahatma Gandhi* by Romain Rolland, there are some excellent sentences of comparison of these two religious leaders of modern India. "Tagore looked upon Gandhi as a saint," says M. Rolland, and he deplored his political activities, especially his non-coöperation doctrine. Tagore seeks and finds harmony in coöperation. He wrote, "My prayer is that India may represent the coöperation of all the peoples of the world. For India, unity is truth, and division evil." In summary, the French writer says, "To my mind Gandhi is as universal as Tagore, but in a different way. Gandhi is a universalist through his religious feeling; Tagore

is intellectually universal. While venerating him, (Gandhi) we understand and approve Tagore." [9] In *Creative Unity,* Tagore has included an essay upon "The Nation" in which he stresses "the fight" to-day between "the living spirit of the people" and the methods of organizing nations.

If one were to prophesy which type of Sir Rabindranath Tagore's writings will survive among many peoples, the chances are in favor of his mystical prose-poems and his national songs. The latter have kept alive the love of home-country and faith in India. They are sung by boatmen on the Ganges, by the peasants in the fields, by students and groups at all kinds of festivals and conferences. These songs are of two kinds; one is a wistful idealization of the "Motherland," with graphic pictures of scenery, homes, and religion; the second type is the "Song of Consecration," of sacrifice and valor, exampled in "Follow the Gleam," to which many young Nationalists have marched and died. Bitterness is absent from nearly every line by this poet-patriot; there is spiritual excitation, strong appeal to love of home and broader idealism. It has been said that contradiction is evident between some of these national songs and the

[9] *Mahatma Gandhi: The Man Who Became One with the Universal Being,* by Romain Rolland, translated by Catherine D. Groth, New York, 1924. By permission of the Century Co.

broad humanism of many other writings, notably those in the *Gitanjali.* Those who know the man personally, and who are familiar with the tenets of Hindu philosophy which he embodies, as well as the spiritual ideals of the Upanishads, do not find it difficult to reconcile the two creeds, as he has united them in his "Ode to the Earth" and some of the essays in *Sadhana.*

While it is gratifying to note that Rabindranath Tagore, as prize winner, found incentive to write more idealistic literature, yet it is evident that he never has surpassed the earlier books of distinctive quality, books that maintained the classic traditions of his native literature but gave them new form and significance, as *The Gardener, The Post Office, King of the Dark Chamber, Gitanjali,* and *The Elder Sister.* When he was in the United States he read, at colleges and other places, many passages from *The Gardener* and *Gitanjali.* The two books have similar tone and melody; both are difficult to translate into adequate English because much of the mysticism is lost in concrete words—the same is true of his plays when they are staged without sustaining the "illusion" of the Oriental atmosphere. In native language the rhythm and music surpass and interpret the words; the swaying movement accompanies many odes and invocations. A song that may be chanted with the music of the flute, and thus appreciated, is one of the mystical lyrics beginning.

I am restless, I am athirst for far-away things,
My soul goes out in a longing to touch the skirts of the dim distance.
O Great Beyond, O the keen call of my flute!
I forget, I ever forget, that I have no wings, that I am bound in this spot, evermore.[10]

Gora, a so-called "novel" by Rabindranath Tagore, has been issued this current year. It tells the story of a Hindu youth, a Brahmin, whose full name is Gourmohan Babu. He cherishes a large-souled ambition to "unify" India but he cannot break down the barriers of his religious fanaticism enough to consent to the marriage of his younger brother, Binoy Babu, to a girl of a lower Brahmin caste. The romantic interest vibrates from the love affairs of Gora to that of his brother. The chief merit of the book is not its art as fiction, for that is negative, but the graphic presentation of religious tenets and native customs. The author seems, at times, to be seriously concerned about the development of his hero and the more tolerant brother; in other places, he introduces an element of whimsical humor and kindly irony as in the unexpected sequel of Gora's parentage. Poetry and essays or short tales, rather than fiction of long-sustained plot, are the forms of writing best adapted to his gifts.

[10] *Gitanjali: Song-Offerings* by Rabindranath Tagore, New York, 1916. By permission of the Macmillan Co.

As *The Gardener* represents the youth of Rabindranath Tagore, with normal desires fused with spiritual longings, so *Gitanjali* is the expression of the mature philosopher-poet, still responsive emotionally but seeking for "joy eternal." He has preserved for world literature, the philosophy and poetry of earlier teachers like Chaitanya Deva, usually called "Nimäi," the Hindu poet, who lived near Bolpur, the home of Tagore. In addition to these revivals of the earlier tenets and aspirations in poetry, Rabindranath Tagore has become an international humanist. He has never lost his joy in Nature and in solitude but he has walked forward into the vision of a united brotherhood and a spiritual commonwealth.

CHAPTER XI

ROMAIN ROLLAND AND *JEAN-CHRISTOPHE*

In 1916 the prize of 1915 has been awarded:
Rolland, Romain, born 1866: "as homage to the exalted idealism in his authorship, and also to the sympathy and truth with which he has drawn different types of people." [1]

There was no prize money awarded in literature for 1914. The announcement that the winner for 1915 was Romain Rolland, author of *Jean-Christophe,* was generally approved. Here was an instance when a single book had focussed attention of readers and the judges; this masterpiece, which had appeared in France at intervals from 1904 to 1912, had been translated into many languages and much discussed. It was a mirror of the conditions of society, especially in France and Germany at the junction of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; it was an exhaustive, vital life story of a musician with aspirations, struggles, loves, defeats, revolts, friendships, and tragic, but triumphant, end. In the biography of Rolland by Stefan Zweig, emphasis is laid upon the period of

[1] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1915.

nearly fifty years of the author's life as a quiet scholar and musician, "an artist working without serious interruption or serious recognition," and then a sudden, disturbing publicity which followed in the wake of this novel.[2]

Clamecy, a little town of the Morvan on the Nivernais canal, was the birthplace of Romain Rolland, January 29, 1866. His father was a notary; his mother was daughter of a magistrate; she was musical and religious, devoted to her son and the younger child, Madelaine. Their happy home life is reflected in pages of the section, "Antoinette," in *Jean-Christophe*. When he was young, Romain Rolland showed taste for music and his mother taught him and told him stories about great musicians. When his school days ended at the Communal College in his native town, his father, with rare self-sacrifice, gave up his law practice in Clamecy and went to Paris, becoming clerk in a bank that the boy might be educated in the best schools. After attendance at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand until he was twenty, he entered the Ecole Normale Supérieure where he specialized in history. Gabriel Monod was a teacher of surpassing influence over the minds and characters of his students. Rolland was enthusiastic

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[2] *Romain Rolland: the Man and His Work* by Stefan Zweig, translated by Eden and Cedar Paul, New York, 1921. By permission of Thomas Seltzer.

By courtesy of Henry Holt & Co.

ROMAIN ROLLAND

about Tolstoy, both as reformer and writer.[3] For Shakespeare he had ardent admiration, especially for the historical plays and sonnets.

Another friend of these tentative years was Paul Claudel, the author of books with mystical tendencies upon the history of Catholicism. Already Rolland had expressed a fugitive, recurrent wish to write a romance, "the history of a single-hearted artist who bruises himself against the rocks of life." Such was the norm of *Jean-Christophe.* He was surprised, and not wholly pleased, when he was told that he had won a traveling scholarship from the Normal School and could go to the French School of Archeology and History at Rome. For two years he stayed in this city, making contacts with some of the vital influences of his life, notably the friendship with Fräulein Malwida von Meysenburg; she was many years his senior but still alert and inspiring. She knew intimately scores of statesmen, writers, and artists, as references in her book, *Mémoires d'une idéaliste,* testify. She took a profound interest in this young Frenchman with his musical gifts and visionary hopes. In his essay, "To the Undying Antigone," Rolland speaks of his gratitude to two women—his mother and Fräulein von Meysenburg. With the latter he went

[3] See his *Tolstoy,* translated by Bernard Miall, London and New York, 1911.

to visit Wagner at Bayreuth and increased his musical enthusiasm and knowledge. One day, as he was walking on the Janiculum, the germ-idea and plan of his epic novel, *Jean-Christophe,* formed in his mind but its writing was delayed for many years.

Back in Paris as lecturer at the Normal School, and at the Sorbonne, he determined to attack indifference to the fine arts. His thesis had a title of arresting words for that time, "The Original of the Modern Lyrical Drama." While in Rome he had written a few plays that were not made public, *Orsino, Caligula,* and *Niobe.* He was eager to increase interest in music at the Normal School and elsewhere. He attended musical festivals at Bonn and Strasburg and began that series of biographies published later as *Musicians of Former Days, Musicians of Today, Beethoven, Handel,* and other volumes. He married the daughter of Michael Bréal, the philologist, at whose home he met noted men of letters, science, and art. His wife was cultured and sympathetic with his aspirations to extend knowledge of music and art among the people. He rebelled against educational restrictions, as well as political reactions; in such moods he wrote plays such as *Danton, Fourteenth of July, Triumph of Reason,* and *Saint Louis,* a heroic legend. He urged popularizing of the theatre and lamented the dominance of "the aristocratic theatre." Some of the articles which he

wrote at different times on this theme have been translated by Barrett H. Clark as *The People's Theatre* (New York, 1918). He looked to the theatre as beneficial to the people in three ways: "(1) as a source of joy; (2) as a source of energy; (3) as a source of guiding light to the intelligence."

Before Rolland had really "found himself" in literature, the Dreyfus case racked his sensitive soul. In almost all his later writings there are references, direct or implied, to this "welter of feeling" which divided families and shattered friendships. At the time of the trial he wrote, "He who can see injustice without trying to combat it, is neither entirely an artist nor entirely a man."[4] He wrote a dramatic parable, *Les Loups* (*Wolves*) under the pseudonym of "Saint Just," in which he lifted "the problem from the realm of time into that of the eternal." As the political strife became more personal and bitter, Rolland retired from public attention and devoted himself to writing lives of artists like *Michael Angelo* and *Millet* and musicians. He contributed the first chapters of *Jean-Christophe* to the literary magazine, *Cahiers de la Quinzaine,* known to students *only* for many years. In two small rooms on the fifth floor of a Parisian house, above the boulevard Montparnasse,

[4] *Century Magazine,* August, 1913, article on Rolland by Alvan V. Sanborn.

Rolland wrote and read, seeing a few friends, taking walks, and playing the piano for recreation. Outwardly, he was serene; inwardly, he was seething with indignation at the falsities and hypocrisy of life, at the disdain shown for spiritual values, at "the world dying of asphyxia in its prudent and vile egoism," as he expressed it in *Jean-Christophe.*

Slowly, without any aids of publicity, the real value of *Jean-Christophe* became apparent to critics and discriminating readers, as the last volumes appeared in the magazine. German journalists called attention to its unique merits. Paul Seippel, the Swiss writer, related the life and earlier work of Rolland. In June, 1913, Rolland was given the Grand Prix of the French Academy. Translation of *Jean-Christophe* was made into English by Gilbert Cannan and critics awakened. The same year Rolland republished some of the plays written in his student days, under title, *Les tragedies de la foi;* by examples of such heroes as "Saint Louis" and "Aërt," he would inspire the people of the twentieth century to a new idealism. His play, *Wolves,* has been staged in Yiddish in New York, has been translated into English by Barrett H. Clark, and has been performed at the University of Minnesota.

In his epic story of a musician and his associates, Rolland was a preacher of aspiration and harmony to the whole world, in spite of localized atmosphere.

He recalled the words of Goethe, "National literature now means very little; the epoch of world literature is at hand"; and he urged, "Let us make Goethe's prophecy a living reality." [5] His hero was to have a long, circuitous journey in his search for expression of his aspirations; he was to meet many kinds of people and races; he was to have some of the tragic experiences of musicians of real life, Beethoven, Wagner, and Hugo Wolf; he was to keep aloft the banner of idealism, of faith in humanity. Like the author, he was to be victimized by the hard realities of life and disillusionments. The book was to have many themes and varied notes but was to be blended, at the last, into a perfect symphony. The preludes were written in 1895–1897; the last chords were played in October, 1912. Parts were written in France and Italy; others, in Switzerland and England.

No work of fiction of such prodigious length, totaling more than 1550 pages, in the three-volume edition translated by Gilbert Cannan, could be written without many lapses, many passages of uneven merit. Some of the characters are vital and haunting to the memory, like Olivier, Grazia, Antoinette, Sabine, Jacqueline, Emmanuel, Dr. Braun, besides the hero;

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[5] *Romain Rolland: the Man and His Work* by Stefan Zweig, translated by Eden and Cedar Paul, New York, 1915. By permission of Thomas Seltzer.

others flit across the pages and are forgotten. Condensation of some chapters would add to their effectiveness but the author's discursive, intuitive comments make a valuable asset of the book. It may be reread in parts with enjoyment, just as a musical program, for an evening, has selected movements in a fugue or a symphony. When it was suggested to Rolland that he seemed to show enmity towards Germany, by some of the reproaches of her false standards, his reply was, "I am not in the least an enemy of Germany"; in proof, he cited that he had rated soundly as many faults in France, in Volume V, as he had in Germany in Volume IV. He contended that Germany had creative energy and moral vigor but that she was "sick" in this twentieth century, just as France was diseased and needed to be purged to restore her noble qualities. Heroic souls are found in both countries but the people, as a whole, fail to interpret each other aright. Unless such understanding can be established in *friendship,* war will sunder the nations—such was the prophetic message of *Jean-Christophe* which was fulfilled two years later. His book was intended as a "common heritage for all" of Europe.

Time will fix the exact status of this epic novel and its lasting influence upon international thought. It may be classified as allegory, romance, psychological study, or idealistic vision; it has sincerity, inspiration,

and imaginative intensity. The author's statement that he always thought of the life of his hero as analogous to a river, is significant; he sustains the imagery from the first Dawn, Morning, Youth, and Revolt in Germany to the very end of the journey "across the border," to the final act where "Saint Christopher" hears the roar of the torrent but also, the "tranquil voice of the Child" as the Angelus sounds forth The New Day. Gilbert Cannan has compared the phases of life, explored by Jean-Christophe, to the tortuous channel of an uncharted river. His judgment that this novel is "the first great book of the twentieth century," is more stable than the prophecy of other critics that would leave out the word "first." It has many passages of artistic perfection, like "Antoinette," "The House," and "The New Dawn." With emotional fervor the author, in the closing volume, speaks his message to the future, apostrophizing the young men; "You men of today, march over us, trample us under your feet, and press onward. Be ye greater and happier than we. . . . Life is a succession of deaths and resurrections. We must die, Christophe, to be born again." [6]

And since the award, what has Romain Rolland

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[6] *Jean-Christophe* by Romain Rolland, translated by Gilbert Cannan, Vol. III, p. 348, New York and London, 1913. By permission of Henry Holt & Co.

written? *Colas Breugnon,* the tale of a Burgundian artist, translated in 1919 by Katherine Miller, is less intense, much more free and diverting than his long novel. It was a work of relaxation for the author during the summer months in Switzerland, 1913. He had recently visited his birth town and modeled the hero, in part, from a resident, a wood carver there, "an artist of the vanished type." He has his struggles and defeats but he never loses his optimism. The next year the war began, with its devastating, soul-searing effects upon Romain Rolland. He had seen its black shadow and had forewarned the people in *Jean-Christophe* but the actual conflict overwhelmed his spirit. Like Olivier, in his story (whom he resembles in many ways), he had feared such a war from boyhood; it had been "a nightmare to him; it had poisoned his childhood days." He was at Vevey, on Lake Geneva, when the war broke out and he decided to stay there; he longed for France but he could not fight without blighting his soul. He would suffer as a pacifist, loving his country, rather than yield to hate. He did secretarial work for the Red Cross and assisted in welfare measures of many kinds. When the Nobel prize money came, he gave it "to the mitigation of the miseries of Europe." [7] He wrote some of the

[7] *Romain Rolland: the Man and His Work* by Stefan Zweig, New York, 1921, p. 270.

papers that were collected in *Above the Battle;* his friendly letter to Hauptmann, appealing for amity, and the German's reply, are given here. In spite of the aggressive tone of the German's note, Rolland refused to believe that the ideals of human brotherhood had been destroyed; they were suffering eclipse temporarily but would relive in "The New Dawn." To Woodrow Wilson, in the later months of the war, Rolland made an appeal to "be the arbiter of the free peoples." On the day of the armistice he issued a manifesto, *L'Humanité,* a call to "brain workers," comrades all through the world, to reconstruct a fraternal union. The play, *The Montespan,* translated by Helena van Brugh de Kay, is called a "sequel to *Above the Battle.*" He had written, during these days of seclusion and thought, his study and appreciation of *Mahatma Gandhi: the Man Who Became One with the Universal Being* (translated by Catherine D. Groth), which has been quoted in the previous chapter upon Rabindranath Tagore.

As relaxation, he wrote *Liluli,* a comedy with the "goddess of illusion" as its heroine. There are some lines of satire and some of burlesque, as the combatants wrestle. It was symbolic of France during the war years, as *he* viewed his country, scorning Truth and heaping up ruins of past greatness. This has been illustrated with thirty-two wood engravings by Frans

Masereel (New York, 1920). While Rolland was exercising his ironical wit upon this picture of war, he was writing *Clerambault: the Story of an Independent Spirit during the War,* a sad portrayal of a pacifist. This has been translated by Katherine Miller (New York, 1921). It is a dissertation more than a story, a presentation of the author's own sentiments, with much philosophy about life and conflicts. The man, Clerambault, passes through strange spiritual experiences. The early scenes of his rural home life, peaceful and happy, are contrasted with his fanaticism when he reaches Paris and urges his son, Maxime, to enter the army; then come reactions, after the death of the son and his own probings of conscience. The author interprets the tale as a tragedy for the man and his wife, but a triumph of freedom for his soul. There are many autobiographical touches in this psychological story.

In 1922 there appeared in Paris, from the pen of Rolland, the first volumes of *L'âme enchantée* which is now appearing in English version, by Ben Ray Redman, as *Annette and Sylvie: The Prelude* and a second volume, *Summer,* translated by Eleanor Stimson and Van Wyck Brooks. In his Foreword the author tells his readers that they are starting with him upon a new journey which will not be so long as that of *Jean-Christophe* but will include more than one stage.

He asks suspension of judgment until the tale is finished, quoting the old adage, "La fin loue la vie, et le soir le jour." He expresses the domination that his characters gain over him—Jean, Colas, Annette—so that he becomes no more "than the secretary of their thoughts." No thesis nor theory is in this story but it is another life history, struggling to find Truth, to reach harmony of spirit amid many kinds of buffetings and joys. Two girls, half sisters, Annette and Sylvie, afford him scope for sharp antitheses in character-drawing. Annette is a girl of fine health and brain, educated at the Sorbonne. She had adored her father but, because of some letters which she found after his death, she realizes his infidelities to her mother and understands his secretive smiles. She locates her half sister who never bore his name—Sylvie, pretty, uneducated, capricious, gay, unmoral. The deep passions of Annette, her reserves and independence, her repugnance to any "possessiveness" on the part of her lover, Roger Brissot, and his family, lead to a scene of erotic realism. This is followed by words of the author's own creed, his Search for Truth: "I am not one of those who fear the fatigues of the road. . . . I am seeking. . . . I am convinced that it is possible to love one's child, loyally perform one's domestic task, and still keep enough of oneself, as one ought to—for

the most essential thing . . . one's soul." [8] The second volume reveals the material and spiritual conflicts of Annette, as a mother and teacher, and Sylvie's experiences in marriage and business.

In his latest book, as in his earlier plays and fiction, M. Rolland has revealed that idealism which, in his philosophy, means harmony and freedom, of both aspiration and action. His form is often careless and sometimes crude; but it has high lights of great beauty and true art. In his own life he has waged many battles that have left scars upon his sensitive temperament and fine soul. They have never shattered his spiritual creed, his faith in humanity. He has written ardently in behalf of international friendship and intellectual unity. In the future he may be ranked as a prophet as well as a scholar, a seer as well as a writer. Amid the turmoil of his generation he has been a force, making for peace; he has held high the banner of world-fellowship and sounded the challenge against racial jealousies.

[8] *Annette and Sylvie: Being Volume One of the Soul Enchanted* by Romain Rolland, translated from the French by Ben Ray Redman, New York, 1925. By permission of Henry Holt & Co.

CHAPTER XII

A GROUP OF WINNERS—NOVELISTS AND POETS

Heidenstam of Sweden (1916)
Pontoppidan and Gjellerup of Denmark (1917)
Carl Spitteler of Switzerland (1919)

The prize of 1916 has been awarded:

Heidenstam, Verner von, born 1859: "in recognition of his significance as spokesman of a new epoch in our literature." [1]

"Sweden's Laureate" is the name often given to Verner von Heidenstam who won the prize in 1916. By public, competitive vote of his countrymen he had been chosen as the most popular poet before he was accorded this world honor. He is less familiar, by translation in English, than his compatriot who preceded him in recognition by the Swedish Academy, Selma Lagerlöf. His plays, novels, and poems are gaining new appreciation through the translations in recent years by Charles Wharton Stork, Arthur J. Chater, and Karoline M. Knudsen. He was born of

[1] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1916.

aristocratic family at the manor house of Olshammar in Närke, July 6, 1859. As a boy he was never strong; he was shy and loved to read, especially poetry and hero stories. When he was in early adolescence, he developed such a condition that lung-disease was feared and he was sent to the south of Europe for a milder climate. For eight years he was away from Sweden, spending time in Italy, Switzerland, Greece, Turkey, and Egypt. Some of his ancestors had been in governmental positions in the Orient; he was lured by the picturesqueness and freedom of these lands.

His first ambition was to be a painter; for a time he was a student of Gêrome in Paris. Critics have often recognized this quality of the painter's skill in his poems, in selection of objects and colors and in reproduction of life in Paris, in Italian carnival days, and at Damascus. While Heidenstam was still a young man, he fell in love with a Swiss girl of the people and married her. At an old castle of Brunegg, estranged for a time from his parents, he lived in seclusion, seeing few people except his wife and August Strindberg who had become deeply interested in the young poet. Already he had decided that literature, not art, must be his profession. He wrote many poems that were gathered later as *Pilgrimages and Wander-Years*. In *Thoughts in Loneliness* one may read expressions of his moods of longing for home, mingled with resent-

ment against injustice. "Childhood Scenes" is an example, beginning:

I've longed for home these eight long years, I know.
I long in sleep as well as through the day!
I long for home!
I seek where'er I go, not men-folk, but the fields
Where I would stray,
The stones where as a child I used to play.[2]

There are sundry references to his mother; a line that will arouse sympathy reads,

She prayed my life might have a worthy goal![3]

In the poem, "Fame," he is melancholy and laments:

You seek for fame but I would choose another
And greater blessing:
So to be forgotten
That none should hear my name;
No, not my mother.[4]

The death of his father, in 1887, called him back to Sweden; here, with intervals of travel, has been his residence through his mature life. A volume of his *Poems,* following those of *Pilgrimages and Wander-Years,* increased his reputation among his countrymen.

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[2] *Sweden's Laureate: Selected Poems* translated by Charles Wharton Stork, New Haven, 1919. By permission of Yale University Press.
[3] *Ibid.,* "Mother."
[4] By permission of Yale University Press.

They were of diverse types; some were emotional like "A Man's Last Word to a Woman"; others were scenic and dramatic narratives, like "The Forest of Tiveden" and "The Burial of Gustaf Fröding." The lyrical quality in his songs adapts them to community singing; his "Sweden" is most familiar and has been compared by Mr. Stork to John Masefield's "August, 1914." The vibrant quality is strong; the patriotism is appealing:

> Oh, Sweden, Sweden, Sweden, native Land!
> Our earthly home, the haven of our longing!
> The cow-bells ring where heroes used to stand,
> Whose deeds are song, but still with hand in hand
> To swear the eternal troth thy sons are thronging!

In later poems, as well as prose essays, Heidenstam has shown ardent liberalism and a spirit of brotherhood. "Singers in the Steeple" emphasizes

> Not joy to the rich, to the poor men care;
> Our toil and our pleasure alike we share.

Poems, published in 1902, contain appeals for democracy and universal suffrage, in the verses, "Fellow-Citizens," and other lines. Like his predecessor, Björnson, he is both national and universal in his idealism. With honor and love he has written the elegy of Björnson as "Norway's Father," with the closing lines:

Yet the soul of the people deep within
Still breathes the eternal brother-song,
We stand and gaze at the sunset long
And grieve for thee as one of our kin.[5]

Verner von Heidenstam must be included on the lists of novelists as well as poets. In 1889 he published his first romance, *Endymion,* a new treatment of an old theme. With a painter's glow of fancy he sought to depict, through a love story of moderate interest, the atmosphere of the East, when it is clouded by restraints of Western civilization. He had registered rebellion against the growth of naturalism in fiction: in *Pepita's Wedding* (1890) he urged idealism, and search for inner truth. The term, "imaginative realist," which has been used to classify Heidenstam, is especially applicable to the fantastic, emotional tale, *Hans Alienus* (1892). As writer of fiction, however, the name of Heidenstam will always be linked most closely with *The Charles Men* (*Karolinern*)—stories of Charles XII and his wars—a series of prose-poems depicting Swedish heroism, written with fervor and artistic finish. A translation by Charles Wharton Stork, with introduction by Fredrik Böök, has been added to the *Scandinavian Classics* (American-Scandinavian Foundation, New York, 1920). Among

[5] *Sweden's Laureate: Selected Poems,* translated by Charles Wharton Stork, New Haven, 1919. By permission of Yale University Press.

the best of several dramatic tales are "French Mons," "The Fortified House," and "Captured." Like Rolland, Heidenstam is a pacifist yet he has written a vigorous tribute to this "King who lived his whole life in the field and died in a trench," the man who was a genius in war but, like his heroic men, gentle as well as brave, with lofty visions.

Other romances followed this major work, *The Charles Men*—tales and folklore, sagas and modern applications in *Saint George and the Dragon, Saint Briggitta's Pilgrimage,* and *Forest Murmurs.* In fiction and essays the writer has attacked naturalism that "lets the cellar air escape through the house." Some of his significant essays are collected as *Classicism and Teutonism.* It is unfortunate that so few of his works are adequately rendered into English. He has contributed to liberal and reform journals. In 1900, marrying for a third time, he bought a home near Vadstena, the place of his childhood, and with his wife, a woman of broad culture and social charm, he has exerted a wide influence upon Swedish life. In 1912 he was elected a member of the Swedish Academy which honored itself, as well as him, by the award of the Nobel prize four years later, after his candidacy had been urged throughout Scandinavia and elsewhere.

Among his verses had been delightful "Cradle

Songs"; he had written, also, juvenile stories. He was asked by the Swedish educational authorities to write a Reader for school use. He calls this "a work of love." Without the originality and glamour of Miss Lagerlöf's books, *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils* and its sequel, this Reader contains some absorbing tales of heroism, and poems and scenes of descriptive merit. For older youths and adults he has embodied poetic legends with modern teachings in two plays, translated into English by Karoline M. Knudsen, *The Soothsayer* and *The Birth of God* (Boston, 1919, 1920). The first play is located upon "An Arcadian Plain" with Apollo, the Soothsayer, the Fates, and Erigone, wife of the Soothsayer, as leading characters. There are sentences of subtle humor about "a man in love," and more serious counsel of Apollo, with modern meaning:

> Son of dust!
> Thou didst try to serve two gods; therefore, thy power became
> thy doom!

The Birth of God is founded upon Egyptian mythology, with symbolism in the words of Dyskolus, an Ancient, to a modern merchant, A Stranger, comparing "the altar-fire and the sacred hymn," when "divine destiny had not been forgotten," with humanity of less pure standards.

The Tree of the Folkungs, translated from the Swedish into English by Arthur J. Chater (New York, 1925), is a romance, mingling history, sagas, fantasy, pageantry, action, and modern interpretation of some of the deeds and ideals of the Vikings. It has been compared to *Peer Gynt.* Two distinctive parts of the book, welded into one story, are "Folke Filbyter" and "The Bellbo Heritage." The elemental character that gives title to the first part is Earl Birger, sacrificing to all gods in adversity and pulling down all altars in days of prosperity. He opposes the dynasty of the Folkungs but he ends his days in squalor and piteous craving for the love denied him by his sons and grandsons, a lesson to moderns of the futility of material miserliness. The second section of the strange, impressive tale deals with the fortunes of the Folkungs two hundred years later and the conflict between two brothers and their differing standards, King Valdemar and Junker Magnus. The latter considers his older brother a "good-hearted, sunny-eyed fool," compared with his own masterful ways. This legendary romance-pageant has scenes of dramatic power—the battle between Valdemar and Magnus, the love of the minstrel for an outcast maiden, and many customs of historical and imaginative past. It is an elaborate, well constructed revelation of Heidenstam's imaginative insight and vigor, united with his skill in inter-

preting the *past,* in history and sagas, to the problems of the *present hour.* He is, in truth, "the herald of a new epoch in our literature."

Henrik Pontoppidan

The prize of 1917 has been awarded one half to:
Pontoppidan, Henrik, born 1857: "for his profuse descriptions of Danish life of today." [6]

The Swedish Academy had sprung several surprises in the awards of the first fifteen years but they surpassed all previous records, in 1917, when the honor was divided between Henrik Pontoppidan and Karl Gjellerup of Denmark. Danish writers, in general, were less known by translation in France, Italy, England, and America than their neighbors of Sweden and Norway. Outstanding exceptions are Hans Christian Andersen and Georg Brandes. The Danish Royal Theatre was recognized in contemporary life as an educational force; such playwrights of earlier and later days as Holberg, Oehlenschlager, and Edward Brandes had been studied by dramatic scholars in many countries. Bergström's play, *Karen Borneman,* translated by Edwin Björkman, is discussed by Barrett H. Clark in *A Study of the Modern Drama.*[7]

[6] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1917.
[7] New York, 1925, p. 27.

Another play by Bergström, *Thora van Deken* (1915) was a dramatization of a novel by Pontoppidan.

An interesting note, regarding the reaction to this joint award of 1917, is found in the *American-Scandinavian Review*.[8] The first comment is upon the ages of the recipients—both were past sixty—"another veteran medal" for writers whose productivity is past. In addition, says the editorial writer, "Neither has mastering genius that would entitle him to the prize." Pontoppidan is the better known; he stands for progress that will not forget tradition. Vilhelm Anderson, literary historian, has said of Pontoppidan's writings, "Modern Denmark could be reconstructed entire from his books." The family had scholars, among them a bishop, Eric Pontoppidan, of the seventeenth century, who published the oldest Danish grammar in Latin.

Henrik Pontoppidan was born at Frederica in Jutland, in 1857. His grandfather and father had been clergymen. While he was a schoolboy the family moved to Randers where he remained until he went to Copenhagen, to the Polytechnic Institute, to study engineering. He made a visit to Switzerland where he had his first love affair and wrote his early sketches. In 1881, in Denmark, appeared *Clipped Wings*, a col-

[8] Vol. VI, p. 109.

lection of stories of which "The Church Ship" excels in imagination and dramatic concentration, the mystical mingling with the realistic. In 1891 he lived for a time at Ostby but a few years later, after his second marriage, he moved to Copenhagen where he has been a noted leader in educational and literary life, a friend of Brandes and an adviser of the younger dramatists and novelists. He has been called an imitator of Ibsen; an echo of some of the melancholic effects of *Brand* and *Ghosts* may be seen in Pontoppidan's tales but he is distinctive in his methods of portrayal. He is criticized sometimes as narrow and localized, without spiritual vision.

A trilogy of novels (1892–1916) presents scenes and characters in the rural life of Denmark. The first book, *The Promised Land,* is depressing, strongly realistic in its hero, Emanuel, called by some critics "a prose Brand." It is a tale of disillusionment, a revelation of the struggle of idealists in this world of material ambitions. It is written with care—three years was devoted to it—and the note of sincerity is marked. The second novel, *Lucky Peter,* to which the author devoted four years, is partly subjective. The hero, like his author, was son of a clergyman and studied as an engineer. *The Kingdom of the Dead,* written during the war years, reflects such influences with a stronger tone of patriotism than is dominant in

the author's other tales; it is loosely constructed but it gives clear glimpses of Copenhagen, both in city streets and outlying districts. *The Apothecary's Daughter* has been translated by G. Nielsen (London, 1890).

In an English edition of Pontoppidan's stories, *The Promised Land* and *Emanuel, or Children of the Soil,* translated by Mrs. Edgar Lucas, with several illustrations by Nelly Erichsen (London, 1896), the illustrator explains the author's purpose in the chapters of *The Evolution of the Danish Peasant.* He has chosen a disturbing period in educational and religious life after the Danish peasant was transformed from a slave to a citizen, by the act of 1849. Political parties, "The National-Liberal" and "Friends of the Peasants," were formed and high schools were established. Then, by a revision of 1866, the liberties of the peasants were again threatened and despair settled on their minds. In two remote villages, Veilby and Skibberup, prototypes of the places where the author had lived and taught for a time and knew the people, he has portrayed their customs and revolts in a vivid, descriptive style.

In some of his short stories, like "Eagle's Flight" and "Mimosas," Pontoppidan reveals himself at his best as narrator. He is deeply interested in educational progress for his people; he urges freedom from

hypocrisy and weak compromises. Idealist in his aspirations and photographer of Danish life in town and country, he is an author whose writings will be appreciated as the years add to their interpretations and translations.

Karl Gjellerup

The prize of 1917 has been awarded, one half to:
Gjellerup, Karl, born 1857, died October 13, 1919: "for his many-sided, rich, and inspired writing with high ideals." [9]

Like Pontoppidan, Karl Adolf Gjellerup was the son of a clergyman. He was born at Roholte in 1857. To please his father he studied for the ministry, and took examinations in theology, but he was not willing to accept my parish. He was deeply interested in "modernist doctrines" and became a disciple of Darwin, Georg Brandes, and Spencer. Later he recanted from some of these teachings and became less radical and more historical in his studies. He delighted in the Eddas and had a natural flair for literature even before he became a professional writer. He has lived much of his life in Dresden, where his popularity seems to be greater than in his home country. Said the commentator on Gjellerup, in the *American-Scandinavian Review,*[10] after the prize was divided between him and

[9] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1917.
[10] Vol. VI, 1918.

Pontoppidan in 1917, "his appointment has been received with marked coolness in Scandinavia."

As a writer, Gjellerup has traveled far afield for his subjects. He has written books on art and music; he is an ardent Wagnerian and has studied many aspects of this influence, as his writings testify. He has tried his hand at plays in which he sought to reconcile the modern spirit of Christianity with the Greek love of beauty. It is not a new theme—nor is there much distinction in his treatment. He has translated, in modern Danish language, several tales of the Eddas and old Norse sagas. By translation into English he is known especially by two stories, *The Pilgrim Kamanita* and *Minna;* other novels, typical of his style are *An Idealist* and *Pastor Mons,* with satirical and photographic passages.

The Pilgrim Kamanita, translated by John E. Logie (London and New York, 1912), is subtitled *A Legendary Romance.* It is laid on the banks of the Gunga, when Lord Buddha visits the "City of Five Hills"; there is graphic description of locusts and coral trees and blossoms in the grove of Krishna. The text is from Byron's *Don Juan*—"This narrative is not meant for narration"—an indication of its imaginative quality. The opening pages are brilliant with colorful passages, "billowy clouds of purest gold," blossoming gardens and terraces and "a long line of

rocky eminences, rivaling in colour the topaz, amethyst, and the opal, were resolved into an enamel of incomparable beauty at this City of the Five Hills." Kamanita was the son of a merchant in the land of Avanti, among the mountains. He was rich, well educated, could sing and draw, could color crystals and "tell whence any jewel came." At twenty he was sent on an embassy of business to King Udena in Kosambi. Here began his "Pilgrimage" in love and memories that form the trail of this story. Mysticism, and esoteric philosophy are *mixed,* rather than *blended,* with realism.

Minna, the novel translated into English by C. L. Nielsen (London, 1913), has Dresden for its background. There are songs from Wagner and music by Chopin and Beethoven, interspersed with the tale of Minna and her tragic life, after her *mariage de convenance.* In a note, dated Dresden, August, 1912, the author confesses, "I have often felt a homesick feeling for the Danish *sund.*" He adds that he has been reading Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies,* bequeathed to him by his deceased friend, Harald Fenger. This love story, in manuscript form, was entrusted to Gjellerup before Fenger died in London, after he had lost "Minna" and developed a fatal illness of the chest. With these memories before him, he narrates this romance of the hero who comes into the country,

near the Elbe and, crossing the ferry, meets a pretty governess and Lisbeth, whose chief distinction was that of wearing a veil, "at a time when veils are out of fashion." The character of Minna is revealed largely through letters with emotional tones. There are disillusionments as well as emotional joys in this tale, justifying the motto chosen from Moore's line, "To live with them is far less sweet than to remember them."

The Nobel honor to Gjellerup was appreciated much in Germany because his influence upon art and literature had been strong, especially in Dresden. He interpreted, to Danish readers, certain factors in German life and philosophy. While his Danish compatriots recognize his scholarly work, his literary insight, and subtle wit, they do not rank him as a genius nor essentially as a Danish writer. Some leaders in that country would have much preferred to be represented, among Nobel prize winners, by a versatile, world-honored writer like Georg Brandes, or a playwright like Bergström (before his death in 1914) or a poet like Drachmann (before his death in 1908) or a writer of localized scenes but broad vision like J. V. Jensen. There are elements of poetic insight and analytical skill in the romances by Gjellerup; and translation into English will increase appreciation of his literary influence.

Carl Spitteler

The prize of 1919 has been awarded:
Spitteler, Carl, Switzerland, born 1845; died 1925; "having especially in mind his mighty epic *Olympischen Frühling.*" [11]

Another small country and an author, little known outside France and Germany and his own land, was the choice for the award of 1919—Carl Spitteler of Switzerland. There was no prize given in 1918, in literature. In spite of the fact that Nietzsche had written of Spitteler as "perhaps the most subtle æsthetic writer of Germany," [12] his name was not familiar to international readers. Born in Liestal, a canton of Basel in 1845, he was nearly seventy-five years old. His work had been idealistic in trend, thus fulfilling one condition of the prize; his epic for which he was honored had been completed fourteen years before—*Olympian Spring.* He had suffered from disappointments and lack of appreciation by critics until his later years. He had never lost his zeal for literature and desire to promulgate ideals of truth and freedom.

He was fortunate in opportunities for travel and

[11] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1918.
[12] *Carl Spitteler;* monograph compiled by Eugen Diederichs Verlag in Jena.

study as a youth. His father was in the post-office service at Basel and later was Secretary of the Treasury at Berne. While at Basel University, Carl Spitteler came under two influences of lasting results on his life and writing—Wilhelm Wackernagel, the German philologist, and Jacob Burckhardt, the historian of the Italian Renaissance. He loved music, especially Beethoven, and showed taste for art. Later he went to the Universities of Zürich and Heidelberg, to study history and jurisprudence. He took courses in theology—thinking he might be a minister—but decided wisely that his bent was towards philosophy and literature. His ambition was to become an epic poet; he essayed to write *John of Abyssinia, Atlantis, Theseus and Heracles* but he pushed aside these pioneer efforts as puerile. For eight years he was tutor in Russia, in the family of a Russian general. While there, he was writing slowly the poem that he had planned in student days at Heidelberg, *Prometheus and Epimetheus*. It was issued first under the pseudonym of "Felix Tandem" and ten years later with his own signature.[13] His Prometheus is "an exalted soul," suffering rather than proving untrue to his spiritual ideals. By contrast is his brother, Epimetheus, receiving Pandora's gifts and material honors but losing his soul until he recalls Prometheus from exile, to drive away

[13] *Studies from Ten Literatures* by Ernest Boyd, New York, 1925.

"the powers of evil." There is depth of philosophy mingled with modern ideas in this poem of grace and beauty. He was charged with imitating Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra* so he wrote a pamphlet, *My Relations with Nietzsche,* emphasizing his ignorance of the latter's work when he wrote his poem on Prometheus.

He continued his teaching in Switzerland at Berne and at Neuenstadt, spending thirty hours a week in the classroom; then he did some journalistic work at Basel. In 1883 he married and soon after published *Extramundana,* in which he told, in verse, cosmic myths of the history of creation. A collection of his lyrics, *Butterflies* (*Schmetterlinge*), excel in rhythm and love of nature. In 1891, he inherited a small fortune; from that time he was relieved from routine teaching and writing; he went to Lucerne where the scenic beauty increased his literary inspiration. He experimented in various forms—a series of essays known as *Laughing Truth* (*Lachende Wahrheiten*), with irony and earnestness mingled, a prose idyl, *Gustav,* and a juvenile *Mädchenfeinde,* translated by Mme. la Vicomtesse Le Roquette-Buisson as *Two Little Misogynists* (New York, 1922). There are clever illustrations by A. Helene Carter. This is an amusing tale, perhaps more appealing to adults than to children readers by its subtle wit and modern

educational problems; but it is entertaining and lively. Two boys, aged ten and nine, Gerold and Hänsli, "fine, healthy boys," are returning to a military school after a vacation. If only some great event might save them—a flood or earthquake or epidemic among the teachers, or "a declaration of war." Their feelings towards the girls, Theresa and Marianelli, are natural and amusing. There is irony in the warning given to Gerold lest "he should think for himself," a process that is both popular and unpatriotic, as many people consider.

After the publication of some poems as *Balladen* in 1905, Carl Spitteler wrote *Imago,* which he declared was "an explanation of Prometheus and Epimetheus—what really happened." "Prometheus shows what a poet made of it." [14] Autobiography, as in many of his books, reappears in the young man, Victor, the poet in *Imago;* in the discussion or analysis of Frau Doktor and German womanhood, the author has shown the *provincial* attitude, in many conditions of life outside Germany as well as within.

Der olympische Frühling, which is known by translation as *Olympian Spring,* was the mature expression of Spitteler as poet. It appeared from the press at intervals from 1900 to 1905. It has five parts,

[14] *The German Classics,* edited by Kuno Francke, New York, 1914, *Carl Spitteler: Life and Works,* Vol. XIV, pp. 493–515.

with more than thirty cantos, written in iambic couplets. Four lines, describing Apollo, from *Olympian Spring,* have been freely translated by Thekla E. Hodge:

> Threefold is thy royal crown of fame:
> Thou hast conceived it: that shows thy lofty aim.
> Thou hast dared it: that tells the hero's valor.
> Thou hast achieved it: from thousands thou art chosen.

The poem mingles classic mythology with satire, contemporary problems, humor and idealism. With high praise, it has been called "The Divine Comedy of the New Century." [15] It has been compared to Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound,* to Keats' *Endymion* and other epical poems. Ananke, ruler of the universe, is a vitalized character from mythology who imprisons the gods in Erebus. He permits them to start on a journey to visit the distant world while Moira, daughter of Ananke, gives springtime and peace to the world. Their joy is turned into discord and suffering as they come near;—

> And from the yawning cleft the echoes' thunder rolled,
> For aye no spot on earth but witnessed grief untold.

The blue flower of Memory has a vital part to play. The angels chant their message of hope, their assurance of "a coming morn" when cocks will crow at the

[15] *Contemporary Review,* January, 1920, article by J. G. Robertson.

advent of a Saviour, and Part I ends in a climax of idealism. The "Winning of Hera," Queen of the Amazons, and the choice of Herakles as wanderer on the earth, suffering any tortures for the sake of Truth, are larger themes in Part II. Marguerite Münsterberg has made an interpretive translation of parts of this epic poem which won for its author the Nobel prize.[16] There is drollery and satire, as in the plan of Aphrodite to lead mankind away like children, and the frustration by rain and burlesque features. The poetic climaxes are vigorous and the complete work is masterly and epical.

Spitteler is often ranked as representative of German literature in Switzerland, in company with Gottfried Keller, Conrad Meyer, author of *The Monk's Marriage,* and Joseph Victor Widman, author of *Saints and Beasts.* He showed influences, in prose and verse, of Goethe and Schiller but he had originality in his approach to his subject and its treatment. He endured much loneliness of spirit from neglect of his literary messages and from political bitterness. During the war he urged the neutrality of German Switzerland and so lost favor with the people who had stimulated and encouraged him; in return he gained popularity in France and was given the greeting of the

[16] *The German Classics,* edited by Kuno Francke, New York, 1914, Vol. XIV, p. 515.

French Academy when he was seventy years old. His poems vary much in tones and measures; there are musical *Bell Songs* (*Glockenlieder,* 1906) and light, joyful *Butterflies* of earlier years. In the later *Ballads* he often struck a note against commercialism, with a ring of robust idealism in behalf of spiritual values, and denunciation of those "Prudes to the bone"—

> For what of old our fathers virtues made
> They've chaffered for in markets or betrayed.

The death of Carl Spitteler at Lucerne, in the current year, revived interest in his life and writings, and evoked recognition of his influence towards revival of the best in classicism, and his aspirations for freedom and sincerity in modern life and letters.

Among many tributes to the work of this poet a few may be cited from the monograph, compiled by Eugen Diederichs Verlag in Jena, translated for this book by Thekla E. Hodge. Michael Georg Conrad, often compared with Spitteler as a leading exponent of modern German literature, writes: "The marked superiority of Spitteler over his contemporaries in the realm of *belles-lettres* is due to his brilliant creative genius, and the rare combination of deep feeling and keen humor." Widman, another author-critic, writes of *Prometheus*: "In this poem he blends poetry with religion (mythology) and thought (philosophy). Unfor-

tunately, we can draw no comparison for nothing like it is found in literature." The same critic is enthusiastic about the poems, *Butterflies* (*Schmetterlinge*). "The fate of these wondrous little creatures, whose transformation has ever brought to the human mind a mysterious and touching symbolism, was wrought by the poet's touch into scenes of dramatic tragedy, and irresistible charm."

Several commentators have stressed the qualities of vigor and grotesqueness, combined with idyllic poetry in the epics and lyrics by Spitteler. One of the most sincere tributes was that of Romain Rolland, written soon after he had received the Nobel prize and before that honor was given to Carl Spitteler. He regrets that it was not bestowed upon the Swiss writer and adds: "Spitteler is to my mind the greatest European poet, the only one today who approaches the most famous names of the past. . . . Strange blindness of the world to pass by the living flame of the genius of the most inspired poet without even divining its splendour." The award of 1919 was the fulfilment of Rolland's desire.

CHAPTER XIII

KNUT HAMSUN AND HIS NOVELS OF NORWEGIAN LIFE

The prize of 1920 has been awarded:

Hamsun, Knut, Norway, born 1859: "for his monumental work, *The Growth of the Soil.*" [1]

It was characteristic of a type of journalism in the United States that the announcement of the Nobel award in literature for 1920, to Knut Hamsun, should have been featured in a digest of news thus: "The Horse-Car Conductor Who Wins the Nobel Prize." A passing incident in the life of this author—a few months of service on street cars in Chicago—but they loom large in minds that cherish trivialities. His works in fiction and drama, more than twenty-five in number, have been translated into a score of dialects; he is an outstanding and unique figure in the literary life of to-day; his development of personality and fame vies in interest with the challenging quality of his writings. Few authors have been so self-revelatory as he has been in his plays and novels. Except for statistical facts and side lights, to be found in other

[1] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1920.

sources, one can make almost a complete picture of his background, his early struggles and revolts, his innate poetry and growing idealism, by reading in succession *Hunger, Mysteries, Pan,* and *Munken Vendt,* followed by *Dreamers, Benoni, Children of the Age,* and *Growth of the Soil.*

Although Knut Hamsun's parents were of peasant stock, the boy, born August 4, 1860, at Lom, in Gudbrandsdalen, in eastern Norway, inherited strains of artistic craftsmanship. His grandfather was a worker in metals (sometimes called a blacksmith) but fortunes were low and, when the lad was four years old, the family moved from the Gudbrandsdalen mountain valley to the Lofoden Islands, Nordland. Here, amid wild, awesome scenery and simple fisherfolk with sordid tasks, the youth grew to young manhood. For a time he lived with an uncle who was a preacher, of the state church; he was a severe man. In his short story, "A Spook," Hamsun recalls those days with their floggings and work and hours of escape to the cemetery or the woods.[2] Before he could satisfy his cravings for an education, he was apprenticed to a shoemaker in Bodö, in Nordland. He managed to get his first writings published; in 1878 appeared the serious poem, that showed appreciation of the glowing

[2] *Knut Hamsun: His Personality and His Outlook upon Life* by Josef Wiehr, *Smith College Studies in Modern Languages,* Vol. III, Nos. 1 and 2, pp. 2, 3.

By courtesy of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

KNUT HAMSUN

colors and wild aspects of nature, *Meeting Again,* and the story *Björger* with the pseudonym, Knud Pederson Hamsund. While there were interesting bits of autobiography, this initial fiction was imitative of Björnson and has not been revived by its author among his books.

Restless and unwilling to spend his days at Bodö as a shoemaker, he worked for a short while as coal heaver, and later as road-maker and school-teacher and sheriff's assistant. Then, like so many Scandinavian youths, he decided to emigrate to America. Some of these earlier experiences are recalled in his novels, *A Wanderer Plays on Muted Strings* and *Under the Autumn Star* (in the English edition united as *Wanderers*). In the United States he drifted from one occupation to another and covered a wide range of pursuits as street-car conductor, farm laborer, clerk in grocery store and lecturer. He cherished hopes of literary chances in this country but the lack of them, and the misfortunes that came upon him, made him bitter for a time, in retrospect. Those who recalled him on the Halstead street car line in Chicago, and later on a cable line, affirmed that he had "a perpetual stare into the horizon," that he was "out-at-elbows" and had small volumes of classic poets sticking out of his pockets.[3] They add that he would forget to ring

[3] *Literary Digest* 67: 35, November 20, 1920.

the bell for passengers or would fall over their feet in his reverie. One is skeptical of such detailed memories of famous men. In the summer of 1885, he was back in Christiania, doing some journalistic work and lecturing. Hanna Arstrup Larsen in her authoritative study of Knut Hamsun [4] says that he had been at the University of Christiania, before he went to America; but that he found he was a misfit and went back to his "old life on the road." [5]

In 1886, says Professor Josef Wiehr,[6] he returned to the United States as correspondent for *Current Events* (*Verdens Gang*) but he was obliged to undertake manual work to get a living wage; for a time he was with a Russian fishing vessel off the Newfoundland banks. For about a year he was secretary to Kristoffer Janson, a Norwegian clergyman in Minneapolis; he was then twenty-eight years old, and had been working on a farm in North Dakota. He wanted a chance to lecture in Minneapolis on literary topics but his ambitions were unrealized and he left America with some bitter feelings and the manuscript of his satirical book, *The Spiritual Life of Modern America* (or *Intellectual Life in Modern America*), sometimes entitled *Of American Culture*. In a copy of this book,

[4] *Knut Hamsun: A Study* by Hanna Arstrup Larsen, Knopf, New York, 1922.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[6] *Knut Hamsun: His Personality and His Outlook upon Life*, Northampton, 1922.

owned by Edwin Björkman, Hamsun wrote an inscription, dated 1905, thus, "A youthful work. It has ceased to represent my opinion of America."[7] He scoffs at "American patriotism, engendered by means of tinfifes"; he asserts, "There is an enormous gap in American liberty, a chasm which is kept open by the thick-headed democracy"; he finds no cultural life but coarse materialism and "prudishness" and "self-satisfied ignorance."[8] The book justifies a critic's comment that it is "a masterpiece of distorted criticism."[9] His short story, "Woman's Victory," in the collection, *Struggling Life,* is based on his experiences in Chicago; in the Preface, he tells of his life as car conductor. "Zacchæus," in the collection, *Brushwood* (1903), is reminiscent of the days upon the North Dakota farm.

In Copenhagen, on his return from America, he enlisted the interest of Edward Brandes, then editor of a daily newspaper there. Through his influence, place was found for the manuscript of *Hunger Sult* in a Copenhagen magazine, *New Soil,* in 1888, to appear anonymously; two years later it came out as a book,

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[7] Introduction to *Hunger* by Knut Hamsun, translated by Edwin Björkman, New York, 1920. By permission of Alfred A. Knopf.

[8] *Knut Hamsun: His Personality and His Outlook upon Life* by Josef Wiehr, Northampton, 1922, pp. 8, 9. By permission of Prof. Wiehr.

[9] Introduction to *Hunger,* translated by Edwin Björkman.

with the author's name on the title-page. It was immature and subjective, but it gripped readers everywhere by its sincerity and whimsicality. Miss Larsen makes a true criticism of this book when she says it is "without beginning and end and without a plot but it has a series of climaxes." Antithetical to such passages of poetic and dramatic power there are pages of naturalism that cause a revulsion of emotion and seem to some readers an insult to taste. It is absolutely true and relentless; perhaps, as Professor Wiehr suggests, "By the production of this work, Hamsun sought to free his mind from terrible memories of the past that were haunting him" (p. 13). Two years later the same mixture of poetic high lights and crass realism characterized *Mysteries.* Johan Nagel is the restless hero who falls in love with Dagny Kielland, daughter of the pastor, and meets with tragic experiences and suicide. Like his author, "Nagel is at odds with life" and finds peace only in nature. Like Hamsun he tries vainly to adapt himself to conventions of society and becomes embittered. "The Hamsun ego," as Miss Larsen calls the *motif* of these earlier tales, recurs in *Editor Lynge,* the drama, *Sunset,* and *Pan* (1894). Lieutenant Glahn, the hunter in this last book, is happy in his hut and outdoors but is proudly unhappy in contact with humanity; the tale ends in tragedy. Edvarda, the woman of this story, is erotic and capricious

to the point of disgust yet she has a pathetic element in her nature.

Victoria shows an advance away from the "Hamsun ego" of revolt and naturalism towards that of poetry: Johannes, the hero, the miller's son, is in harmony with nature; even loss in love cannot blight his soul. There are sentences of poetic diction in this novel and in *Munken Vendt* (1902), the dramatic poem which embodies the character of a lovable, simple vagabond. One recalls the words of Edwin Björkman, in the Introduction to his translation of *Hunger;* "The artist and the vagabond seem equally to have been in the blood of Hamsun from the very start." [10] Before he attained to the second type of novel—the less subjective and more idealistic group—(if idealism may be so expanded in meaning) Hamsun wrote a trilogy of plays, beginning with *At the Gates of the Kingdom* (1895) with Kareno, a philosophical student and writer, as hero, and a wife of sexual domination. The author's tenets about life and government are voiced by Kareno in this drama and *Life's Play,* ten years later in setting; the third in the cycle, *Sunset* (1898) shows Kareno at fifty, full of scientific doubts and reactions from earlier aspirations for liberty and truth. The author indulges his satire against pro-

[10] *Hunger,* translated by George Egerton, New York, 1920. By permission of Alfred A. Knopf.

fessional "moralists" in these plays; sometimes, he indulges, also, his unvarnished frankness of sensual portrayals, and his lack of deference for old age. The play, *In the Grip of Life,* was translated by Graham and Tristan Rawson and issued in 1924 (Knopf). The women in his plays are, generally, animalistic, or erotic, lacking diversity in types.

With the appearance of *Children of the Age* (or *Children of the Times*) in 1909, followed by *Segelfoss Town* and *Growth of the Soil,* the reader of persistent interest in Hamsun realized that the author had orientated himself, that he was "finding his place" in literature. He was still defying society, "the group," still disclaiming belief in democracy, but he had gained "a social vision." In method characteristic of many novelists, he has chosen a family, with strong racial traits, the family of Willatz Holmsen, for the expression of his sociological ideas. The despotic, anxious Willatz III, a retired Lieutenant, is a character that lingers in memory; he is vitally real in his relations with his wife, of higher social rank, and with his son, the musicianly boy; he is dramatic and pathetic in his defiance of Tobias Holmengraa, the industrial "king" from South America. The last days of stubborn pride and loneliness are scenes of artistic fiction. *Segelfoss Town,* written before *The Growth of the Soil,* but translated afterwards by J. S. Scott

(Knopf, 1925), continues the story of this family and the departure of Holmengraa, after a financial collapse, leaving behind his daughter, Mariane, half Mexican in blood, who marries the commercial "leader of the small town. Segelfoss Town has been called a 'Norwegian Main Street.'" There is much irony and reiterated sordidness in the tale. The telegraph operator, Baardsen, is a daring, strong character.

In the Introduction to *Dreamers,* W. W. Worster (New York, 1922) calls *The Growth of the Soil* Hamsun's "greatest triumph." It is the *one* book thus far appearing in American edition, that seems to win wide reading. It is localized in setting, objective in theme, and universal in human appeal. Isac (or Isak is a convincing character of elemental type. He symbolizes man, when face to face with nature. Inger is a coarse Lapp woman in her physical nature yet she seeks expression for finer feelings, even as she strangles the third baby girl that would bear, through life, the mother's curse of a hair lip. "Back to the soil!" is the message of this masterpiece of Norwegian fiction. It has a large group of Norwegian characters, and a challenging tone regarding many moral issues, but it maintains artistic unity.

That Knut Hamsun has grown steadily in literary skill, that he has written novels of vigor and photographic effects, cannot be denied. That he has a

philosophical attitude towards humanity and the driving forces behind society (especially as applied to Norway), is also evident. His self-education, his persistence, and his assimilated judgment, together with caustic wit and grotesque humor, are other qualities that must be accounted to his credit. On the other hand, he is often slothful and diffuse in structure and offensive to æsthetic minds because of his stress of sexual impulses and his coarseness. He does not condone immorality but he seems indifferent to its existence. In his personal convictions, however, he realizes the need of a basic morality. Says Professor Wiehr: "It is just this absence of 'the triumph of a moral idea' which will stand most in the way of any popularity of Hamsun's works with the great majority of American readers." Other explanations of Hamsun's attitude towards Christianity and "constructive ideas" are given in this excellent study by Professor Wiehr.[11] He thinks that his countrymen, and "all backward nations," are in a much better position to follow his advice than the millions that populate the countries leading the world in industries." Some critics affirm that Hamsun's compatriot, Johan Boyer, in his condensed, dramatic novels, *The Great Hunger, The Last of the Vikings, A Pilgrimage,* and *The Emi-*

[11] *Knut Hamsun: His Personality and His Outlook upon Life* by Josef Wiehr, Northampton, 1922.

grants is more gifted as a novelist and shows more evidences of idealistic vision. In his personal life, Hamsun has revealed the traits of the wanderer, "vagabond" if you will, combined with the deep-rooted love of home and devotion to his countrymen in their industrial needs and their educational struggles. He is not an optimist but he advocates persistent work and the preservation of spiritual freedom and courage.

CHAPTER XIV

ANATOLE FRANCE—VERSATILE STYLIST IN FICTION AND ESSAYS

The prize of 1921 has been awarded:

Anatole France (Thibault, Jacques Anatole), Paris, born 1844; died 1924: "in recognition of his splendid activity as an author,—an activity marked by noble style, large-hearted humanity, charm and French *esprit*." [1]

When Anatole France, who had been the Nobel prize winner of 1921, died in the autumn of 1924, there was scarcely a journal of standing in any country that did not summarize his influence upon letters and life in France and other nations. Distinctly Parisian in traits and expression, this writer was broadly international in his analysis of humanity, in his genial mockery of life, in his dreamy idealism which coexisted with a ruthless realism. He had lived the full span of life—and *lived* it to the end of his eighty years. He had written in moods of biting satire and emotional intensity; he had found themes in history, current topics, and the future. As he neared the close of his life, the emphasis was more upon the genial, kindly as-

[1] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1921.

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ANATOLE FRANCE

pects of humanity; his later literary expressions were memories of his boyhood and youth, the completion of that cycle of intuitive memories that began with *My Friend's Book* (1885) and *Pierre Nozière,* and ended with *Little Pierre* and *The Bloom of Life* (1922).

Between these volumes of imaginative and reminiscent delights, which form a better biography of his mind and spirit than has otherwise been written, Anatole France produced such diverse literary types, such books of ironic and cynical flavor as *The Red Lily, Thaïs, The Revolt of the Angels, The Amethyst Ring, At the Sign of the Reine Pédauque, Crainquebille, The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife, The Elm Tree on the Mall, Penguin Island, The Gods Are Athirst, The Life of Jeanne d'Arc, The Human Comedy,* and volumes of critical essays and poems. To the books of more reminiscent flavor, with wistful idealism, he was indebted, especially, for the honor of the Nobel prize. These had already won the tributes—and critical estimates—of readers of European countries, of Canada, United States and South America. Few writers have had such diverse judgments passed upon them; in many cases, the temperamental traits of the critic influence his reactions to this author; in other instances, most effusive tributes, like those by James Lewis May and Paul Gsell, of recent years (1924), have brought natural reactions in more

unvarnished truth, tinged with wit and naturalism, like the biography by Jean-Jacques Brousson: *Anatole France Himself* which has been called facetiously *Anatole France in Bed-Slippers* (the French title reads *Anatole France en pantouffles,* 1925). Mr. May has written as a friend and warm admirer; Paul Gsell, as a disciple; M. Brousson, as private secretary and fearless narrator.

It might be said that Anatole France was *born* into the inheritance of books in 1844, for his father, François Noël Thibault, was a bookseller of repute throughout Paris and its environs. Son of a shoemaker in Anjou, this elder Thibault had taught himself to read and write while he had been in military service as a young man. At his bookshops in the Quai Malaquais and Quai Voltaire gathered scholars and authors, iconoclasts in politics and letters and religion; the shopkeeper was a Royalist and a fervent Catholic. In the character of Dr. Nozière, in *Pierre Nozière,* his son "has taken away the bookshop," as he confesses, but he has revealed many traits of his father's character. In the Epilogue to *The Bloom of Life* are other memories that may be "capricious," as he admits, but are none the less true "records" of his childhood. Here his father's lack of business instincts is suggested as elsewhere—he would often prefer to *read* his books rather than to *sell* them. The influence

of these boyhood days in this bookshop, with contact directly with thinkers and writers, with wits and critics, must have been vital and permeating in the later development of Anatole France as psychologist and stylist.

In his last hours, we are told, this famous writer who had been "a genial mocker at life," an epicurean and scoffer, a scholar of wide culture, called upon the name of his mother. She had been the first, and one of the most significant factors in his life-development. There are passages of less deferential tone about her in *Anatole France Himself: a Boswellian Record,* by Jean-Jacques Brousson (Philadelphia, 1925). She was of good Flemish family, with unfailing *esprit* and optimism, practical and able to "attend to the gears of household management that got loose sometimes," with an absent-minded father. She was, however, a rare story-teller and devoted to her boy with the unusual gifts which she alone, in his boyhood, could foresee and encourage. How happy he was at home is revealed in many chapters of his books—not alone those of acknowledged reminiscence but others like *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard* and an occasional essay *On Life and Letters.* By contrast with the joys of home—the delicate table linen and decanters, the "tranquil faces," the easy talk—he disliked the classrooms and the restrictions of school life, declaring,

"Ah, Home is a famous school." A sense of humor and a keen interest in humanity made the life at the Collège Stanislas endurable but he loved solitude; he resented the gibes of instructors and students, and he stole away to the quays along the Seine at the hour of noon recess to eat his luncheon—or to forget to eat it—and returned too late for the afternoon session and his chance to recite.

It was his mother's faith and intuition that refused to be severe with him, even when the professor's report of his school work was "progress nil—conduct bad," even when his father accepted the verdict of M. Dubois, the professor, that the boy would never accomplish anything in arts or sciences. Then his mother whispered words that he never forgot: "Be a writer, my son; you have brains and you will make the envious hold their tongues." If his mother was the first vital influence in making her son a world-famous writer, the second was the city of Paris that he loved, studied and photographed on his memory from boyhood to old age. The parks and avenues, the Louvre and the Trocadéro, the sidewalk cafés and the bookshops beyond beautiful Notre-Dame, the vivacious men and women, the workers on the streets and the children in the playgrounds, the stately palaces and the tiny rooms above a publishing shop—all these aspects of Paris form a panoramic picture in his books.

In 1868, when Anatole France was an unknown, dreamy, book-browsing young man of twenty-four, there appeared an *Etude* of Alfred de Vigny which was *his* tribute to the poet who was "the exemplar of a beautiful life, which gave beautiful work to the world." The author was known as one of a group of young men who gathered in the rue de Condé to discuss poetry and other forms of writing. Two years later he was serving in the army, trying to forget the shells that dropped in front of him by reading Vergil or playing his flute.[2] In the years that followed he wrote political satires, prefaces, read manuscripts for the publisher Lemerre, collaborated in Larousse's dictionary and did other "odds and ends" of an editorial kind.

After the Franco-Prussian War, Lemerre published the small book of verse to which Anatole France had devoted his leisure and zest, *Poèmes après.* In spite of some stanzas of lyrical beauty they attracted little attention. Better known is *The Bride of Corinth* that appeared three years later and revealed the author's keen analysis of paganism and early Christianity. It is translated with other plays and poems by Wilfrid Jackson and Emilia Jackson, 1920. For a time he was assistant to Leconte de Lisle in the Senate Li-

[2] *Anatole France: the Man and His Work* by James Lewis May, London and New York, 1923, p. 72.

brary.[3] As a witty conversationalist and brilliant companion, he was a favorite in the salons of Catulle Mendes and Mme. Nina de Callias, the would-be poet. At the home of M. de Bonnières, where gathered actors, writers, and musicians, Anatole France was always welcomed. In 1881 appeared the book which registered the beginning of his popular acclaim, *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard;* one may say that it is *the book* by which, during the last forty years, the author has been familiar to international readers, old and young. It is a simple tale, sentimental, without much plot but with two marked qualities of lasting appeal—sincerity and charm. Ten years later he laughed at its continued popularity, especially the claim that it was "a masterpiece," saying "it was a masterpiece of platitudinousness," adding that he wrote it for a prize and won it.[4]

Predictions of future fame were expressed in reviews of this book and, four years later, the public responded to *My Friend's Book,* the first of the cycle of youthful memories, vignettes of life which reveal the author's poetic reveries and friendly humanity. They differ from *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard* as the author gives here photographic pictures of his boyhood, adolescence, and young manhood while in Syl-

[3] *Studies from Ten Literatures* by Ernest Boyd, New York, 1925.
[4] *Anatole France Himself* by Jean-Jacques Brousson, Philadelphia, 1925.

vestre Bonnard, the aged, lovable book-collector and Academician, he gives an imaginative picture of what the author *may be.* He is lonely and dominated by his cat, Hamilcar, and his housekeeper, cherishing the romantic memories of Clementine, and is urged by these sentiments to his sacrifice for her daughter. A few of his boyhood memories, however, are incorporated into the early chapters of this book—the craving for a doll, the silhouette of the uncle, Captain Victor, and other pages of wistfulness and humor. Lafcadio Hearn, in his Introduction to the translation of this classic *roman,* says words that may be applied to the cycle of memories (for they all have hall-marks of the author's superb paradoxical genius). "If by Realism we mean Truth, which alone gives value to any study of human nature, we have in Anatole France a very dainty realist;—if by Romanticism we understand that unconscious tendency of the artist to elevate truth itself beyond the range of the familiar, and into the emotional realm of aspiration, then Anatole France is at times a romantic. . . . It is because of his far rarer power to deal with what is older than any art, and withal more young, and incomparably more precious: the beauty of what is beautiful in human emotion, that this story will live." [5]

[5] London, Bodley Head, Crown Edition, 1924, pp. v and ix. By permission of Dodd, Mead & Co.

After 1886 the weekly "Causerie," which Anatole France contributed *On Life and Letters* to the Paris *Temps,* increased his literary fame and established his rank as critic. Here appeared such diverse, stimulating judgments upon writers of the day, as Maupassant and Dumas, Balzac and Marie Bashkirtseff, François Coppée (compared with Sully-Prudhomme and Frédéric Plessis), Renan and George Sand; among topics of more general interest were "Prince Bismarck," "The Young Girl of the Past and the Young Girl of the Present," and "Virtue in France." Four volumes of these essays, *On Life and Letters,* have been translated into English. It was nine years after *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard* that another book appeared to rivet attention upon this industrious, progressive author. He once declared that he wrote the earlier book "to please the public" but that he wrote the later, *Thaïs,* to please himself. In development of skill in fiction it is superior; it has been well described as "an epic of eternal struggle between the spirit and the senses." [6] The author had passed through some emotional crises since he wrote his earlier books of reminiscence, notably *My Friend's Book,* with its reflections of his happy home life and the whimsical domestic discussions between the wife of his youth

[6] *Anatole France: the Man and His Work* by James Lewis May, London, 1924, p. 120. By permission of Dodd, Mead & Co.

and himself about their daughter, Susanne. He had traveled and become imbued with sensuous beauty of southern lands; he had been annoyed, to the verge of anger, by reactionists, represented in *Thaïs* by Palaemon, "who would banish joy and beauty from the world." He made Nicias, often a skeptic in his surface sentiments, his spokesman. The poet and the realist are commingled in this tale of disillusionment, even as they are found in the later, more vehement books of the novelist-satirist, *The Red Lily, At the Sign of the Reine Pédauque* (considered by many critics his masterwork), *The Amethyst Ring, The Gods Are Athirst, The Wicker-Work Woman, Penguin Island, The Revolt of the Angels,* and shorter stories like *Crainquebille, The White Stone, The Seven Wives of Bluebeard,* and *Tales from a Mother of Pearl Casket.*

Fresh memories of the Dreyfus Case were awakened by his poignant satire in *Penguin Island* with its elements of burlesque. The author's historical research, which bore ripe fruits in *The Life of Jeanne d'Arc,* is revealed in *The Gods Are Athirst,* with sardonic wit and dramatic passages between Evariste, his mother, and his mistress. Julie, his beautiful sister, appeals to the reader's sympathy. The ex-farmer of taxes, whose livelihood is now made by cutting out cardboard dancing dolls, is a haunting character. He

voices, perhaps, the author's attitude to life at this period—that is was full of disillusionment and defeats but was not worth the cost of one's anxiety to the point of despair. In some of these satiric tales of life, notably *The Revolt of the Angels* when they come to Paris and behold certain social conditions, there are passages so naturalistic that they offend tastes of less "sophisticated" readers. Some of the books by Anatole France were tabooed in libraries before the award of the Nobel prize; the year after that was given, all of his works, without due discrimination, were "placed on the Index" by the Roman Curia because of excess of utterances that were communistic and anti-clerical in tone. When he went to Stockholm to receive this prize in person he was reported to have said, regarding the Treaty of Versailles, "the most horrible of wars was followed by a treaty which was not a treaty of peace but a prolongation of the war. The downfall of Europe is inevitable unless at long last the spirit of reason is imported into its councils." [7]

In contrast to these fearless words that brought him the condemnation of French journals, he made more urbane response to the literary honor conferred upon him, adding to his personal gratitude, tribute to the Swedish Academy: "Its decisions possess an inter-

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 108. By permission of Dodd, Mead & Co.

national value, and I rejoice in it, for it is a confirmation of what is, for me, the principal lesson of the war, the beneficent influence exerted by intellectual intercourse with other countries." There had been rumors, well attested, that the young men of France had repudiated Anatole France as a leader, seeking other exponents of philosophy and echoing the adverse comments upon him by Maurice Barrès and Henri Massis, editor of *La Revue Universelle.* They contended that he failed to give them a constructive philosophy in the hour of need. He never claimed to be a philosopher; he was an observer of life, a commentator, a poet-dreamer, a lover of justice, an ironist, a stylist rather than a thinker. He was not widely read in other languages and philosophies as were Georg Brandes or Sainte-Beuve. He bore some relationship to Brotteaux of his story, *The Gods Are Athirst,"* who was condemned to death because of his lack of reverence for great political revolutionists. Anatole France saw the world as a subject for keen wit that is often sardonic but seldom bitter. He found life sadly in contrast with some of his visions as a youth but he did not despair of a future of more equality of conditions, more tolerance in creeds. Paul Gsell, one of his hero-worshipers, in his records of conferences at the Villa Saïd, the Paris home of "the Master," has recalled significant thoughts uttered by him upon "The Credo

of a Skeptic," "Politics in the Academy," and other themes.[8]

In his *Boswellian Record* by Jean-Jacques Brousson (Lippincott, 1925) there are frank confessions of his "show conversations" and his "contradictory ideas" which caused shyness and lack of clarity of mind. He recalls "the almond icing" which he put on his first version of *The Life of Jeanne d'Arc,* to be "picturesque" and to please "the sanctimonious." These "snap-shots" of Anatole France "en pantouffles," in moods of relaxation, are even less interesting than some of the quotations of serious sort from the words of this master of style. Two significant sentences will be often quoted; "You become a good writer just as you become a good joiner; by planing down your sentences." . . . "People take me for a juggler, a sophist, a droll fellow. In reality I have passed my life twisting dynamite into curl-papers." [9]

Without question the return of Anatole France to the spirit and mode of his earlier books, to the idealism, combined with photographic vividness in *The Bloom of Life,* influenced the decision of the Swedish Academy in his favor, in 1921. He was, in his old

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[8] *The Opinions of Anatole France,* recorded by Paul Gsell; in American edition, *The Conversations,* etc., New York, 1924.

[9] *Anatole France Himself: a Boswellian Record,* by Jean-Jacques Brousson, pp. 95, 347, Philadelphia, 1925. By permission of J. B. Lippincott Co.

age, living again the scenes of his youth—discussing with his schoolmate, Fontanet, "People Who Do Not Give Enough"; playing truant from the ferule of Monsieur Crottu whose rule "was a tissue of injustices"; recalling "Days of Enchantment" when he went to his first play; photographing "Monsieur Dubois, the Quiz," and plucky Phillipine Gobelin; and yielding again to the spell of Vergil and the Sixth Eclogue, with its wonder and beauty. The stinging irony disappeared from these later pages—irony which motivated such books (or portions of them) as *Histoire contemporaine* and *The Revolt of the Angels* or "A Mummer's Tale" in *Histoire comique*.

Dual personality which resides in all persons was most marked in this writer of charm and force, this exponent of his race, and of his age among *all* races. "Compassionate idealism" is the phrase chosen by James Lewis May to explain the polemical essays and radical criticisms of governments and religions, that are expressed or implied in many of his writings. James Huneker calls him "a true humanist"; he thinks he loved humanity and learning; he loved words, also, but he was "a modern thinker, who has shed the despotism of the positivist dogma and boasts the soul of a chameleon." [10] He stresses his irony which is

[10] *Egoists* by James Huneker, New York, 1909, p. 143. By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

"Pagan" and his pity which is "Christian." Sisley Huddlestone, in *Those Europeans,* devotes a chapter to Anatole France as "Ironist and Dreamer." The phrases are well chosen; the interpretation of his salient traits is condensed but convincing: "In his irony one constantly catches glimpses of beauty. By showing us life as it is, though without bitterness, he indicates life as it should be. He teaches tolerance and placidity in an age in which even the reformers add to the confusion by their reckless energy." [11]

[11] *Those Europeans* by Sisley Huddlestone, New York, 1924. By permission of G. P. Putnam's Sons.

CHAPTER XV

TWO SPANISH DRAMATISTS—ECHEGARAY (1904), BENAVENTE (1922)

The prize of 1904 was awarded one half to:

Echegaray, José, member of the Spanish Academy, born 1833, died September 14, 1916: "in appreciation of his comprehensive and intellectual authorship which, in an independent and original way, has brought to life again the great traditions of the Spanish drama." [1]

Until recent years, Spanish literature has been less accessible by translation than that of many other European countries. Fiction by Galdós, Valera, Valdes, and Ibañez have given to English and American readers somewhat adequate impressions of the realistic power and poetic undertones of some of these latter-day novelists. In drama, three of Galdós' plays, nine by Martínez-Sierra, a dozen more by Echegaray, and several by Benavente have been rendered into excellent English by such gifted translators as John Garrett Underhill, James Graham, Charles Nirdlinger, Hannah Lynch, Ruth Lansing, and others.[2] In the awards

[1] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1904.

[2] See *A Study of Modern Drama* by Barrett H. Clark, New York, 1925, and *Modern Drama in Europe* by Storm Jameson, New York, 1920.

to Spanish dramatists of the Nobel prize in 1904 and 1922, two generations with their differing standards and literary methods, have been represented—Echegaray and Benavente. In German literature, as exampled by Heyse and Hauptmann, and in Polish fiction, with its representatives, Sienkiewicz and Reymont, one finds the same recurrent recognition in successive generations.

José Echegaray, who shared the honor of 1904 with Frédéric Mistral, was born in Madrid in 1833; that city was his home until his death in 1916, except for periods of travel or retirement because of political friction. As Sully-Prudhomme found his first impulse towards science, so Echegaray studied mathematics "ferociously, ravenously." He made researches, also, in geology and philosophy. Under the republican government he held public offices, like Ministers of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce, President of the Council of Education, and Senator for Life. After teaching at the National Technical School, where he had been educated, he became identified with the University of Madrid.

At first the writing of plays seems to have been a pastime for this mathematician and politician. *The Wife of the Avenger, At the Hilt of the Sword,* and *The Gladiator of Ravenna,* which appeared between 1874 and 1876, were popular in Spain but are little

known by English translation. In 1877 he wrote a drama that has been much discussed, since it was translated as *Madman or Saint* by Ruth Lansing (*Poet Lore,* Boston, 1912); another translation by Hannah Lynch (Boston, 1895) bore the title, *Folly or Saintliness.* Still another translation by Mary Serrano is used in *Library of the World's Best Literature.* It is a strong play emotionally, with that touch of idealism and romance which were traits of the author, blended with his keen analysis. Don Lorenzo, a wealthy man of Madrid, finds that he has been deceived regarding his parentage; he is not the son of a rich mother of noble family, as he and the world supposed, but the child of his nurse, Juana, who dies after she tells him the tale. No longer young, with his daughter engaged to a son of the Duchess of Almonte, he is determined to tell the truth and so defy his family. A specialist in mental disease is called with the physician to examine him; at the same time he sends for a notary to record his renunciation of his name and estate. His final monologue is dramatic, beginning with the lines: "What! is a man to be declared mad because he is resolved to do his duty. It cannot be! Humanity is neither so blind nor so bad as that!"

These earlier plays by Echegaray, which called forth such ardent praise from his countrymen, who

would rank him with Calderon and Lope de Vega of the past centuries, are trivial in literary value beside two of later years, *The Great Galeoto* and *The Son of Don Juan.* Eleven years separated these two strong dramas (1881–1892) during which the author continued to write plays, some with historical setting like *Harold the Norman* and *Lysander the Bandit;* others were of romantic type, some tragedies and more comedies. In general, he sought to revive romantic drama, to proclaim the sharp conflicts in life between passion and duty. His motives were often more pronounced than his characterization; his men and women were sometimes mere mechanisms, fighting their battles for honor and truth. There was a chivalrous note in his lines where domestic fidelity formed the keynote of the emotional struggle. Soliloquy was much used by this dramatist.

When *The Son of Don Juan* and *Mariana* were translated, and linked in the memory of English readers with *The Great Galeoto,* world-critics gave study to this forceful Spanish dramatist who had grown in favor during the decade from 1890 to 1900. Two characteristics of *The Great Galeoto* were noted: the fearless, vigorous portrayal of the evil of gossip and resultant tragedy; the fact that the chief personage in the play exercised occult influence and did not appear on the stage. He is the "busybody," who

creates all the troublesome situations, who directs the characters (or suggests their words) but he is not present. Elizabeth Wallace, in an article of value in the *Atlantic Monthly,* September, 1908, on "The Spanish Drama of Today," says: "This vanishing hero is the cruel, careless world, hastening eagerly to cast the first stone, and, so soon tired of the sport, hurrying on to find some new excitement, leaving death and destruction in its wake." [3] This culprit is the city of Madrid (or society anywhere). There are individualized characters like Theodora and Don Julian; Don Severo, the plotter, may well be compared to Iago.

Even more virile than this romantic tragedy is *The Son of Don Juan;* it suggests Ibsen's *Ghosts,* both in germ-idea and *dénouement,* although it has distinctive merit. Echegaray borrowed the words of the Norwegian dramatist for the lines of Lazarus, "Mother, give me the sun!" In the Prologue the Spanish author expands these symbolic words to "enfold a world of ideas, an ocean of sentiments, a hell of sorrows, a cruel lesson, a supreme warning to society and to the family circle." Society is, again, at the bar of justice, as in *The Great Galeoto;* the offense this time is lax morality of parent, and the lunacy which falls, in retribution, on the child. The

[3] By permission of the Atlantic Monthly Company.

mother of Lazarus is a convincing character. In *Mariana* are found some of the strongest delineations in Echegaray's dramas, notably Clara, wife of Don Castulo, the grotesque archeologist, and Mariana, the widow, with riches in America, described by Clara (in a touch of jealousy, yet appreciation) as "a widow who is hardly a widow and is almost a child." The latter woman is capricious, disdainful, yet passionate in her relations with her lover, Daniel. Melodrama enters somewhat into the closing scenes of intrigue and excitement. James Graham has translated both *Mariana* and *The Son of Don Juan.*

Echegaray continued to write plays, stimulated by the recognition and the honors of 1904. When the award was made, there was a popular demonstration in Madrid; the king presided and presented the prize, while speeches were made by Galdós, Valera, and Mendenez Palayo, who had once been his bitter critic. On this occasion Palayo said: "For thirty years Echegaray has been the dictator, arbiter and idol of the multitude, a position impossible to attain without the strength of genius, which triumphs in literature as everywhere." [4] He was much honored in France and called "a second Victor Hugo." It has not been easy for American students to interpret the plays by Echegaray; they fail to understand fully, especially on

[4] *Review of Reviews,* 31: 613.

the stage, the situations and sentiments of the Spanish dramatist. Many of the keen, brilliant lines, both of analysis and wit, suffer in translation into English. For Drama League readings, or group study and discussion, his plays lend themselves to interpretation and study. This is true, not alone the longer and familiar dramas already noted but such short plays as *Always Ridiculous,* translated by T. W. Gilkyson,[5] and *The Street Singer,* translated by John Garrett Underhill [6] and included in Frank Shay's *25 Short Plays* of international selection (New York, 1925). Irony and wistfulness are mingled in this dramatic picture of the little beggar-girl, Suspiros, of Augustias, the street singer, and her lover, Pepe. Suspiros, sixteen and pretty but sickly, speaks to Coleta, a professional beggar of fifty years: [7]

Coleta. You don't know how to beg.

Suspiros. Yes, sir, I know how to beg; the trouble is, people don't know how to give. I say, "A penny for my poor mother who is sick." And you ought to see how sick she is! She died two years ago. Well, I get nothing. Or else I say, "A penny for God's sake, for my mother who is in the hospital, in the name of the Blessed Virgin! I have two baby brothers." No one gives, either.

Coleta. They don't, eh? And how many brothers are you going to have to-night?

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[5] *Poet Lore,* Boston, 1908.

[6] *Drama,* 25, 62–76.

[7] By permission of John Garrett Underhill.

Suspiros. Ay, Signor Coleta! I had two and nobody gave me anything. Last night I tried four and I got sixpence, so to-night I mean to have five and see what they give me, or whether I just get the cuff from my mother.

Coleta. Just in the family, how many brothers have you, really?

Suspiros. Really, I had two. But they died, like my mother. Ay! they died because of the way my stepmother treated them—as she does me—and I am dying! Listen! If I can make two or three dollars I am going to run away to Jativa, and live with my aunt.

Echegaray was seventy-two years old when he gained the prize; he was already called by some critics a "representative of the older generation." Interest in his plays, however, has gained rather than waned, among critical scholars in every country, and his rank is assured among the romantic dramatists of this century. His seriousness, combined with keen wit and insight, has been compared with similar traits of Tolstoy. Both writers have emphasized the "dignity of suffering" for the sake of spiritual freedom. This is exampled in Echegaray's *Madman or Saint,* already cited. Conscientious and sincere in his work, this Spanish dramatist has left a few plays of strong characterization and potent message to society, a message that has an element of idealism, flashing out amid the grim realities of life.

Jacinto Benavente

The prize of 1922 has been awarded:
Benavente, Jacinto, dramatic writer, Madrid, born 1866: "for the happy way in which he has pursued the honored traditions of the Spanish drama." [8]

Jacinto Benavente, to whom the Nobel prize was given in 1922, was acclaimed as especially worthy by those who sought for a representative of "the new generation" in Spanish drama—what was known as "the generation of 1898" which decried past methods and urged modern themes and viewpoints. Benavente was born in Madrid in 1866, a generation younger than Echegaray. His father was a prominent physician and the boy had stimulating home environment. He studied law for a brief time but he inclined towards writing and the theatre. He had some actual experiences "on the road" with theatrical troupes and with a circus, thus gaining first-hand information about theatrical devices and the needs of both actors and audiences. His first venture in print was as a poet, in 1893, but the next year he published a play, *Thy Brother's House.* This and other immature plays received scanty notice until, in 1896, appeared *In Society.* Two years later *The Banquet of Wild Beasts* focussed attention upon this daring, brilliant play-

[8] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1922.

wright. He became a leader among young professional men in Madrid who, following the Spanish-American War, were eager to renounce tradition and to revolutionize society by exposing its vices and weaknesses. They would punctuate "modernism" in thought and expression with ideals of poetry. A summary of this is found in *A Study of the Modern Drama* by Barrett H. Clark (New York, 1925).

Benavente is less radical than some of his literary associates in Spain, Francè, and Russia. He does not disdain "traditions," if they ring true to life and art. He is graceful and versatile, writing plays of manner and characterization, satires on aristocracy and sympathetic scenes of peasant life. He compels his readers or spectators to *think,* if they will get stimulus from his plays like *The Truth, Autumnal Roses, The Magic of an Hour,* and *Field of Ermine.*

In 1913, Benavente was elected to membership in the Spanish Academy. He is widely quoted on educational and political, as well as literary affairs. He has ideals for a greater freedom than now exists in Spain and other European countries. He has traveled widely, seeing his plays performed and making friends in Russia, England, South America, and the United States. *The Passion Flower* (*La Malquerida*), the tragedy of peasant life with colorful setting and tense emotion, has been popular in America, as a film, and

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JACINTO BENAVENTE

as a play with Nance O'Neil as actress. The Theatre Guild of New York and the Jewish Art Theatre gave careful study to the interpretation of *The Bonds of Interest.* As in many of his plays the serious lesson is not stressed to interfere with the artistry. One of his best characterizations is Nevé, heroine of *El Hombrecito,* often compared to Ibsen's Nora of *A Doll's House.* Benavente believes that the inner meaning of a play must be revealed by the mind or emotions of the spectator or reader. He is deeply indebted—a debt which English and American readers share—for the intuitive, careful translations and editing of several series of his plays by John Garrett Underhill (Scribner's, New York, 1917–1925). Only in such interpretation can one fully appreciate the strength and fineness of character-drawing, the satirical thesis, the fantasy and poetry blended in such plays as *The Governor's Wife, The Prince Who Learned Everything out of Books, Saturday Night, The Other Honor,* and *The Necklace of Stars,* with its fanciful charm and sermonic lesson of love to one's neighbor. In Ernest Boyd's *Studies from Ten Literatures* there is a good summary of his life and work which includes 144 plays. Mr. Boyd raises the question, "Has he been overestimated?" Possibly it is an echo of French criticism. Valuable material is found, also, in Storm Jameson's *Modern Drama in Europe* and *A Study of*

the Modern Drama by Barrett H. Clark (New York, 1925). A new intensive study is *Jacinto Benavente* by Walter Starkie (New York, 1925).

Expressionism classifies the work of dramatists like Benavente, Molnar, and Capek. The methods used by the Spanish playwright to embody this principle are to "generalize" both the action and his characters, so that they become symbols of real life, appealing to the subjective element in readers. He has declared that, henceforth, he intends to write plays for publication and not for the theatre. . . . "The only way in which a play may be appreciated thoroughly is by being read," he says. "I have written more than a thousand parts, yet of that number I can recall perhaps five which I have recognized as being truly the characters I had conceived, when they stepped upon the stage. I have not even seen some of my plays." [9] This stress upon the futility of staging plays that should be interpreted by the reader's own imagination and mind, is not unlike that by Maeterlinck, already noted in a previous chapter.

Benavente not infrequently uses puppets in place of real characters to convey his inner meanings. Sometimes they are given real names but they are not the *true* characters he wishes the reader to discover in

[9] *Plays;* fourth series, xix, edited by John Garrett Underhill. By permission of Mr. Underhill and Charles Scribner's Sons.

them, as in the first scenes of *The Bonds of Interest.* In a brief parable-play, *The Magic of an Hour,*[10] he has two symbolic characters, "A Merveilleuse" and "An Incroyable," two porcelain figures upon columns that converse about life and love, books and flowers, poetry and music. In this adroit, short comedy the author has interwoven some thoughts that express that peculiar idealism which is his, that contrast between weak humanity and the craving "for something which is not ourselves, and yet which is the breath of living." The nearest approach to this ideal is love, which can transform, "by the magic of an hour," evil, men-beasts, cowards, "devils in crime," into "spirits of light, luminous with a divine wisdom through all instincts of the beast." [11] In sentences of such groping faith, such idealism of the "inner eye," scattered through the hundred and more plays by Jacinto Benavente, one may establish, in a measure, his right to the Nobel prize. With this is blended what Storm Jameson calls his "divine sanity." On the score of literary achievement, he is an artist, versatile and sincere, delicate and yet vigorous in his workmanship. His plays vary in value for the student of drama; some of the later titles, like *A Pair of Shoes* or *Doubtful Virtue,* indicate the types of psychological plays among

[10] *Ibid.*
[11] *Ibid., Magic of an Hour,* p. 125.

Continental playwrights. In his finer, more characteristic plays, however, there are vital expressions of idealism. Mr. John Garrett Underhill (in a letter to the author of this book) says, "Benavente is an idealist of the highest type and his philosophy is best and most explicitly stated in *The School of Princesses* and *Field of Ermine*—service and sacrifice."

CHAPTER XVI

W. B. YEATS AND HIS PART IN THE CELTIC REVIVAL

The prize of 1923 has been awarded:
Yeats, William Butler, born 1865: "for his consistently emotional poetry, which in the strictest artistic form expresses a people's spirit."[1]

In the book, *Ideals in Ireland,* edited by Lady Gregory (London and New York, 1901), the editor speaks of the various contributors to this revival of letters including George Moore, Æ (George Russell), Douglas Hyde and W. B. Yeats as "candle-stick makers." Unlike the "butcher and the baker," who have their daily newspaper and appointed tasks that are appreciated, this type of worker, who makes and holds the candle, is not so well served. He is the *idealist* who finds himself, too often, ignored or maligned; he searches out the "dark places of the earth"; he is the seer, seeking for truth, aspiration, idealism. This analogy holds good for many of the winners of the Nobel prizes—Björnson, Mistral,

[1] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1923.

Tagore, Maeterlinck, Selma Lagerlöf, Heidenstam, Rolland. By universal consent of readers the name of W. B. Yeats would be added to this list, the winner of 1923. With delicate imagery Lady Gregory has expressed the subtle gift of this Irish poet-dramatist, his ability to catch "the will o' the wisp fire, miscalled evanescent," which is the mark of universal idealism. In his paper, contributed to this book, *Ideals in Ireland,* Mr. Yeats writes a brief "History of the Literary Movement" in his country and asks whether this revival of folklore and poetry of the soil, which is called the Celtic revival, will become a part of the intellectual and social development of Ireland. These words were written in 1899; the quarter century since then has answered the question in the affirmative and has accorded to Mr. Yeats a large share in this appreciation of simple beauty, love, and chivalry. The names of Donn Byrne and Padraic Colum, James Stephens and Winifred Letts, Lord Dunsany and St. John Ervine, suggest some of the poets and playwrights, "the candle-holders," who have followed the inspiring leadership of Lady Gregory, John Synge, Dr. Douglas Hyde, and W. B. Yeats, weaving their romances and poems about old ballads and folklore of the "sage-cycles" of Irish literary history. In this Gaelic literature are songs of battles and of love, legends of saints and heroes, that have

Photograph by Bain News Service

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

the simplicity and musical vigor of old Greek odes and plays.

As dramatist, certain critics will aver, with reason, that Synge was greater than Mr. Yeats; as researcher among the peasantry for folk tales and forgotten poetry, Lady Gregory and Dr. Douglas Hyde may deserve higher rank. In the writings of Mr. Yeats, however—lyrics, ballads, and plays—there are three distinctive qualities: lyrical beauty, mystical strains, blended wistfulness, and merriment. These poetic distinctions are found in many of his ballads, notably in "The Host of the Air," "The Stolen Child," and "The Fiddler of Dooney"; they form the literary warp of such plays as *The Land of Heart's Desire, The Hour-Glass,* and *On Baile's Strand.* In every edition of his plays Mr. Yeats has emphasized his indebtedness to Lady Gregory for assistance as well as inspiration. In his Notes to *Plays in Prose and Verse* (New York, 1924) he acknowledges the sources of "the greater number of his stories," as those found in Lady Gregory's *Gods and Fighting Men* and *Cuchulain of Muirthemne.* He affirms that these two books have made the legendary tales of Ireland as familiar as are the stories of Sir Arthur and his Knights. Again, he records his gratitude to Lady Gregory for introducing him to firesides where he might get "the true countenance of country life." A third form of help-

fulness was the skill of this friend in her mastery of dialect and her generous work in revising the lines of Mr. Yeats in this detail of form. His own ability to evoke music and poetry from dreams and traditions, and to portray the simple, domestic incidents of peasant life, was coördinated with Lady Gregory's aspiration and background of folklore.

The father of William Butler Yeats was a well-known artist, John Butler Yeats, R.H.A. The son, named for his paternal grandfather, was born at Sandymount, Dublin, June 15, 1865. His father's family had been identified with the church; the grandfather of the poet was Rector of Tullylish Down. His mother's father was a merchant and shipowner at Sligo. The boy passed much time with these grandparents in the old town by the sea. When he was of school age, he was living with his parents in London and went to the Godolphin School, Hammersmith. At fifteen he returned to Dublin, attending the Erasmus Smith School and living with his relatives at Sligo. Memories of these early days are interwoven with legends and fancies in *The Celtic Twilight,* and the novel of autobiographical trend, *John Sherman,* which appeared under the pseudonym of "Gauconagh." Like his hero of this tale, Yeats was homesick in London and longed to return to the environment of Sligo (or Ballah), to the familiar streets, the

rows of tumble-down cottages with thatched roofs, the wharves covered with grass and the walls of the garden where, it was said, the gardener used to see the ghost of the former owner in the form of a rabbit.[2] In his poems he recalled the waves dashing upon the cliffs, the island of Innisfree, and the distant hills at sunset.

His father hoped he would become an artist and so continue the family profession; the youth studied art for a brief time but he was restless and unproductive. He preferred to browse in libraries, reading translations—or making them—from Gaelic tales and poems. Even more he liked to sit by the turf fires in old Connaught and listen to the folk tales of the peasantry. The first poem in his collection of 1906, is addressed "To Some I Have Talked With By the Fire." Here he saw again, in reverie, the ghostly companions and heard the weird tales of

> the dark folk who lived in souls
> Of passionate men, like bats in the dead trees.

When he was nineteen his first poem, "The Island of Statues," was published in the *Dublin University Review*. With other young men at the University he became interested in a Brahmin, who was in London;

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[2] John Sherman, pp. 88–90, and *W. B. Yeats: a Critical Study* by Forrest Reid, New York, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1915.

on their invitation he came to Dublin to teach his philosophy. This yearning towards the occult was natural for a temperament like that of Yeats. He recalled that they fed the Brahmin a plate of rice or an apple every day and listened to his expositions.

Mrs. Katherine Tynan Hinkson, a friend of Yeats in young manhood and later life, in her *Twenty-Five Years; Reminiscences* has given interesting stories of his zest in reciting his poems, even in the middle of the night and of his dreamy, gentle nature. In 1889, *The Wanderings of Oison* established the fame of the young Irish lyrist. Besides the title-poem here were "The Stolen Child" and "The Madness of King Goll." Influences of Tom Moore were traceable in a poem, with lilting rhymes, like "Down by the Salley Gardens," pictorial and sentimental. In London, after the poems were published, Yeats was still homesick, although he made congenial friends at the Cheshire Cheese—Arthur Symons, Lionel Johnson, and W. E. Henley, who obtained for him a commission to write some topics about Ireland for Chambers' *Encyclopedia.* His interest was strong in varied "cults" and forms of symbolism which he revealed in his poems, *The Wind Among the Reeds,* and the essays, *Ideas of Good and Evil.*

Mr. Yeats is both lyrist and playwright; to the latter type of writing he owes his recognition by stu-

dents of the drama in every country; the two qualities are interwoven in his plays. George Moore, Lady Gregory, Forrest Reid, his critic and biographer, and others have stressed his large part in the success, as well as the inception, of the Abbey Theatre, "a gift of immense and national importance upon Ireland." [3] One would not minimize the work of Lady Gregory and Douglas Hyde, of William Fay and Florence Farr and Miss Horniman, who contributed as actors, playwrights, and financial supporters. The assurance of this theater for performance of his plays gave incentive to the dramatic impulse of Yeats. He created new plots and utilized folk tales interwoven with fantasy and poetry. With the aid of Lady Gregory and Edward Martyn, he won success with plays like *The Pot of Broth, Cathleen ni Hoolihan, The King's Threshold, The Land of Heart's Desire, Deirdre* and *The Hour-Glass*. This last play, first in prose, later in verse, is a masterpiece of the morality-play; the Wise Man, faced with death within an hour, goes desperately in search for "one person who believes in God and Heaven," so that he may go to Paradise. Only in Teague, the fool, who has learned his lessons, *not* in the schools of the Wise Men but in the *woods*, can he find such assurance. In later versions of this play the author introduced a strange Gaelic ballad.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 151.

In his Notes to the volume of *Plays in Prose and Verse,* recently reissued (New York, 1924), Mr. Yeats gives credit for the first use of correct dialect to Synge's *Riders to the Sea* and Lady Gregory's *Spreading the News.* In this same Note he declares that his words "never flow freely but when people speak in verse": it need not be rhymed verse, for some of the finest lines in *Deirdre* and *The King's Threshold* are *rhythmical* but not in rhyme. In *The Land of Heart's Desire* the poet-playwright's words all "flow freely." This is a general favorite among his plays with professionals and amateurs upon the stage. Forrest Reid may be extreme in praise when he calls it "the most beautiful thing that has been done in our time," for it invites comparison with *The Sunken Bell, Peter Pan,* and *The Blue Bird* among poetic, fanciful plays. It lingers in memory, however, as pictorial and dramatic, simple and beautiful in May Eve legends and "fairy spell," in the natural characters, well contrasted, of Maire Bruin and her husband, Shawn, of Father Hart and the old parents by the fireside. That is an exquisite couplet that Maire speaks to her sturdy husband, when the fairy calls,

> O you are the great door-post of this house,
> And I the red nasturtium climbing up.[4]

[4] *Land of Heart's Desire* by W. B. Yeats, copyright by W. B. Yeats, New York, 1911; also in *Plays and Controversies,* New York, 1925. By permission of the Macmillan Co.

The Shadowy Waters is another symbolic play, with an undertone of idealism. Begun when Yeats was young, it changed form often before the poet was satisfied. Into this he has introduced varied types—the magic harpist, the sailors, and Dectora, the restless, craving woman. The king, Forgel, who cares not for gold or fame, voices some tenets of the author's creed in the lines:

> All would be well
> Could we but give us wholly to the dreams,
> And get into their world that to the sense
> Is shadow, and not linger wretchedly
> Among substantial things; for it is dreams
> That lift us to the flowing, changing world
> That the heart longs for.[5]

Mr. Yeats has ever been a dreamer-poet; he said once that, if our dreams could all come true, there might not be any poetry to be written; so we are told by his biographer, Forrest Reid. Many of his dreams are embodied in his lyrics, his plays, his short stories and sketches, and his essays, *Ideas of Good and Evil. The Celtic Twilight* and *The Secret Rose* contain some of his most fanciful, poetic tales; "The Binding of the Hair" is an example of his highest art in this form. Dreams of love and service are found in the volumes of poems, like *The Wind Among the Reeds, In the*

[5] *Poems* by W. B. Yeats, copyright by W. B. Yeats, New York, 1911, 1919, pp. 206, 207. By permission of the Macmillan Co.

Seven Woods, The Wild Swans at Coole, and *Responsibilities.* These separate collections are now appearing in the uniform edition of his *Works* (Macmillan). Like Keats and William Blake, Mr. Yeats has been criticized for the lack of human contacts; he has been accused of more interest in and sympathy with waves and winds, with trees and fairy-lore than with deep human emotions. His absorption emotionally seems to be in lyrical and spiritual rhapsodies. In reading a love lyric, like "A Poet to His Beloved," one feels that the dreams and the words are more ardent than the passion of love. One of the best interpretive essays ever written upon Shelley is found in *Ideas of Good and Evil;* these two poets were alike in many moods, in their delicate, elusive fancies. In the exquisite diction of some of his lines, and the fluctuating moods that affect his themes and modes of expression, Mr. Yeats seems to me comparable to Thomas Bailey Aldrich and such delicate lyrics, as "Nocturne" and "A Mood."

In these later years Mr. Yeats has carried his ideals into more active life; he has undertaken *Responsibilities* other than poetic expression. He has been deeply concerned about the future of Ireland and has been a member of the Senate of the Irish Free State. He has become a leader in political and educational, as well as literary, movements. Through the *Daily*

Express of Dublin, he entered the lists of combatants against Bernard Shaw and his adherents who maintained that "poetry is a criticism of life." In expanded thought upon this idea, in *Literary Ideals in Ireland,* Mr. Yeats has prophesied that, as the years pass, the function of poetry as *criticism* will be discarded; for it, will be substituted poetry as *revelation* of life, sometimes in tangible forms, more often in idealistic spirit.

CHAPTER XVII

HONORS TO POLISH FICTION—SIENKIEWICZ (1905), REYMONT (1924)

The prize of 1905 has been awarded:
Sienkiewicz, Henryk, born 1846, died November 16, 1916: "because of his splendid merits as an author of historical novels." [1]

As has been noted in previous chapters, in the Nobel prizes in literature, exponents of the same kind of writing in a country have been honored in successive generations. Björnson and Knut Hamsun, Heyse and Hauptmann, Echegaray and Benavente, Anatole France and Rolland, Henryk Sienkiewicz and Ladislaw Reymont are examples of such awards. Another inference from the lists of winners is that the adjudicators wish to recognize the aspirations and achievements of small countries that are too often overlooked upon the map of world literature. Thus Denmark and Switzerland, Ireland and Belgium have shared with the so-called "great nations" of Europe. Twice has Poland been selected for recognition. The very name suggests struggle and oppres-

[1] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in Literature, 1905.

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HENRYK SIENKIEWICZ

sion on one hand, hope and faith in ultimate right on the other. In spite of tragic sadness, the messages of Poland in art and literature have been vital and lofty in idealism. Some of the melancholy and passionate yearning of later Poland has been expressed in the poets Michievicz and Slowacki, who are allied in their moods with Chopin; the "Funeral March" was described by Liszt as "the murmuring plaint of a whole nation following the bier of its dearest hopes." [2] In his book, *Poland Reborn,* with keen analysis of advance in education and literary opportunities, Roy Devereux says, "Henceforward there will not be need for Polish men of letters like Henryk Sienkiewicz, who belongs as much to Western Europe as to Poland, to seek the protection of a foreign flag for their literary labours." [3] To Sienkiewicz came the Nobel award in 1905, a surprise to European critics and a blow to Russian aspirants for the honor.

Born in Lithuania, at Wola Okrzejska, in 1846, he was sixty when he received the prize; he was already known by translation to international readers. He belonged to a patrician family and was educated at the University of Warsaw until political conditions, following the revolution of 1863, caused him to leave Poland for Russia, where he edited a journal at St.

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[2] *Poland Reborn* by Roy Devereux, London, 1922, p. 237.
[3] *Ibid.,* p. 225.

Petersburg. He wanted to know more of the world so he traveled, in gypsy or Bohemian fashion, in Southern Europe; in 1876 he came to America, to Los Angeles, seeking to found there a Polish Commonwealth of Utopian type. He had written tales and travel sketches under the pseudonym of "Litwos"—*Nobody is a Prophet in his own Country* and *From the Notebook of a Posen.* He wrote impressions of America for a Warsaw newspaper; among these earlier sketches were "Jańko, the Musician," "Across the Prairies," and "In Tartar Captivity." A later tale, "The Old Bell-Ringer," was patriotic and wistful.

In 1880 he returned to Poland where he faced sadness in the death of his wife with the panacea of work upon his trilogy of historical romances of Poland. For eight years he worked winters in Warsaw at libraries and in his study, in summers in the Carpathian mountains. The results were the long, imaginative but strictly historical tales of *With Fire and Sword,* relating events from 1647 to 1651, *The Deluge,* from 1652 to 1657, and *Pan Michael,* dealing with the Turkish invasion and incidents from 1670 to 1674. This cycle of romances showed scholarship and dramatic ability, especially in the first and third stories of the trilogy. The background is panoramic; the dialogue is natural in most places. The author visualized individuals and the Polish people, under

sentiments of distress, fear, love, conflict, and aspiration. The qualities of honor, patriotism, and faith are emphasized in these portrayals of Poland, under successive invasions of Cossacks, Swedes, and Turks. He idealized Poland and gave hope to his people.

Modern Poland was the setting for his next series of tales, *Without Dogma* and *Children of the Soil.* The former is pathological and tragic, the diary of Leon Ploszowski, aristocrat and bore, and his love for his cousin, Aneila. The vices of modern society and self-indulgent forces are in sharp contrast with the heroes of the trilogy. For many years he had studied early Christianity with its opposing force, Paganism. In 1896 he wrote his masterpiece, *Quo Vadis,* which has been called "an epochal book." In many translations it was familiar to readers before the Nobel prize was given to its author. Of somewhat similar trend was the later brief message, *Let Us Follow Him,* which appeared in a single book and is included in the collection of stories and sketches, *Hania,* in translations by C. W. Dynicwicz, Jeremiah Curtin, and Casimir Gonski.[4]

The confessed purpose of *Quo Vadis* was to show "how God's truth, because it is the only Truth, conquered pagan might." The sustained interest in this religio-historical novel is not gained by melodrama

[4] Chicago, 1898; Philadelphia, 1898.

or sensational intrigues. It has breadth and dignity. The characters vary in vividness but among the outstanding photographs are Paul and Petronius, Ursus and Chilo, and the girl captive, Ligeia. He called the tale "A Narrative of the Time of Nero." The background was convincing but Nero was not successfully drawn; even such a master of characterization as Sienkiewicz could not make the Roman emperor vitally real to modern readers but he introduced several dramatic situations that cènter about his baffling personality. The question of the title, "Whither goest thou?" was asked of the modern world of unrest and discord, even as it was asked in the days of the apostles; the author felt the need of guides of to-day to hold up the banner of faith and service.

Sympathy and spirituality were qualities found, not alone in *Quo Vadis* but in many other works in fiction by this Polish writer. *Knights of the Cross,* recounting the struggle between the Poles and Lithuanians against the Teutons, is a favorite with many readers. *After Bread: a Story of Polish Emigrant Life in America* (also entitled, *For Daily Bread* and *Peasants in Exile*) is typical of his tales of emigration. *On the Field of Glory* celebrates Sobieski's rescue of Vienna. Few authors have been so fortunate in English translators as this Polish novelist. Jeremiah Curtin, S. A. Binion, and S. C. de Soissons are among

the best known; they have given fine interpretations to his historical trilogy, his religious novel, and such other stories as *On the Field of Glory, On the Bright Shore, In Desert and Wilderness, That Third Woman,* and *In Vain.* Sienkiewicz lived until 1916, alert and productive, ever exemplifying the word that he used in a criticism of Zola, "The novel should strengthen life, not undermine it; ennoble it, not defile it; bring good tidings, not evil."

Ladislaw Stanislaw Reymont

The prize of 1924 has been awarded:
To Reymont, Ladislaw, born 1868: "For his great epic, *The Peasants.*[5]

Again, a new generation has come "to hold the candle to light the dark corners of the earth" in Poland, since Henryk Sienkiewicz wrote his novels of historical and religious potency. A new group of authors had come forward, many of them scarcely known outside their racial confines. Among the better known of the representatives of "Young Poland" is Ladislaw Reymont to whom the Nobel prize was given in 1924. A few weeks before this award was made public there appeared a translation of the first part of the four-volume novel, *The Peasants* by

[5] Inscription with the Nobel Prize Award in 1924.

Reymont, with the title, *Autumn* (Knopf, New York, 1925). The translator was Michael H. Dziewicki, Professor of English Literature at the University of Cracow. The book attracted meager attention until the Nobel prize was announced; then a furor of interest was aroused in this first volume and those to appear since then—*Winter, Spring,* and *Summer.* Reymont had visited America twice but escaped much publicity. He had been translated into English as author of *The Comedienne* (1920), the tale of a girl who sought to be beautiful and famous on the stage but ended in "philisticism." Some of his short stories had been included in a collection of Polish tales, in the Oxford University series of *World Classics* (1921). An extract from his industrial novel, *The Promised Land,* was used in the *Anthology of Modern Slavonic Literature,* edited by Paul Selver, in 1921. He has written more than a score of novels, and is well known and commended in Germany. Comparisons to Sienkiewicz reveal more pictorial skill, more dramatic vigor like that of Dumas, in the older writer, but a realistic force of surpassing effects in Reymont.

His family was of the lower middle class. His father was a windmill owner in Kobiala Wielka, then in Russian Poland, where the author was born in 1868. He went to the village school and attended to the cattle

and farm work. One of the interpreters of Reymont to Americans has been Rupert Hughes; in the translation of his Preface to the German edition of *The Peasants* we read,[6] "Reymont was born to be the epic poet of the Polish village. He is, in spite of his foreign name, a child of that strange, uncouth world where he began his life among goose boys and cowherders, where he drove the herds of his father, the village organist, and whence he has climbed to the rank of a beloved and recognized poet, spending a large part of his life in Paris, the centre of modern culture." Reymont attended some of the gymnasiums, or High Schools, but he was defiant to the Russian demand *not* to speak in Polish; sometimes he was expelled.[7]

Several trades and occupations gave Reymont experiences which he has used in some of his fiction. He was a clerk in a store, railway employee, telegraph operator, and longed to travel like the hero of *The Dreamer*. For a time he was actor in a small company whose reflections are found in *The Comedienne* and *Lilly*. He was, also, a novitiate with the Paulist Fathers for a time at Czenstochowa. *The Promised Land,* with scenes laid at Lotz and indications of re-

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[6] By permission of Rupert Hughes.

[7] Interview with Dr. A. M. Nawench in *New York Times Review,* November 30, 1924.

volt against the capitalists and landowners (on the part of the proletariat) was a forerunner of his agrarian novel, *The Peasants*. The earlier book has been compared with Zola's *Germinal* in intense naturalism. In this long story, *The Peasants,* Reymont became the "mouthpiece of the peasant and rural elements." Combined with Reymont's devotion to the peasant village as "protagonist," is his passion for Nature in her varied aspects; hence he made his divisions of the book to show the four seasons. Like Thomas Hardy and George Meredith he uses Nature as a vital personality in his story, aiding or restraining the development of his leading characters, especially Yagna, who has been called "a Polish Tess." The English author is superior in condensation and dramatic sympathy.

To use the Polish peasant as literary material is no exclusive trait of Reymont; he has been portrayed by other writers like Ladislaw Orkan, Jan Kasprowicz, and Stanislaw Prybyszewsski. In *The Peasants* the slow movement is varied by scenes of intense emotion, like the marriage festival in *Autumn,* or the death of Kuba, like the passionate quest of Yagna and Antek in *Winter,* and the bitter fight between father and son, husband and lover of Yagna, or the tragic, gruesome scene of the death of the father, old Boryna, in the last pages of *Spring*. The mob-attack upon Yagna,

at the close of *Summer,* grips the reader and makes a strong climax to the epical story. In addition to specific, haunting situations, there are interwoven customs and legends and a wonderful collection of Polish proverbs (a mine of literature!). Passions of love and hate and revenge, the constant excess of vodka and clouded minds, fear of landlord and slumbering revolt against the loss of forest lands and oncoming industrial domination—such are significant factors in this panoramic novel. In the background is the dull color of the soil, the rank smells and fragrant odors of farmyards and woods, sunsets of splendor, and terrifying storms. One of the most poetic, idealistic passages is the last chapter in *Autumn,* the passing of the soul of faithful Kuba, after his long years of service and keen suffering:

> And higher yet it flew, and higher, yet higher, higher—yea, till it set its feet—
>
> Where man can hear no longer the voice of lamentation, nor the mournful discords of all things that breathe—
>
> Where only fragrant lilies exhale balmy odours, where fields of flowers in bloom waft honey-sweet scents athwart the air; where starry rivers roll over beds of a million hues; where night comes never at all— [8]

Many passages in this novel are repugnant to Anglo-Saxon æsthetic tastes, if one is unable to

[8] *The Peasants: Autumn* from the Polish of Ladislaw St. Reymont, New York, 1924. By permission of Alfred A. Knopf.

assimilate the raw sordidness of many modern stories of the soil, with the passages of emotional vigor and poetic beauties. Reymont has revealed, in panoramic form, the life of the Polish peasant, typified in the family and associates of Boryna; he has treated his big theme with psychological insight, realistic photography, and robust idealism. The first and second volumes seem more spontaneous and dramatic than the later. He lacks condensation and incisiveness. An excellent review of the four volumes by Vida Scudder is in *The Atlantic Monthly,* August, 1925.

Reymont knows America far better than Americans know him or his books, but the discrepancy is being remedied. He enjoys friendship with many men of affairs and letters here, including Rupert Hughes, whose story, *What Will People Say?* has been translated by Mme. Reymont, a fine linguist, and published serially in the Warsaw *Gazeta.* Many critics have noted the sincerity of Reymont as man and artist.

In Chapter III, "Naturalism and Nationalism," of the collected lectures, on *Modern Polish Literature,* by Roman Dyboski, Professor at Cracow University,[9] there are interesting comments upon Reymont's earlier work and his tendencies. His attempt at historical fiction, following the lead of Sienkiewicz, was re-

[9] Given at King's College; Oxford University Press, 1924. By permission of *Oxford University Press.*

corded in *The Year 1794* but it was, says Professor Dyboski, a failure, the "bewildering mass of details obscured the outlines of the historical picture." More adapted to his analytical skill are the earlier novels, *Ferments* and *The Dreamer* (largely autobiographical in background), and the later, more impersonal tales that deal with anarchists and political conditions, *The Vampire* and *Opium Smokers*. Like other critics Professor Dyboski ranks Stephen Zeromski as "supreme in the Polish novel today." He compares him to Sienkiewicz; he has the dramatic power and concentration which Reymont lacks. Zeromski is "a social pessimist"; like Sienkiewicz he was a short-story writer at first, then turned to history for fictional themes, like *Lay of the Leader* and has written more recently of contemporaneous conditions. With his faults of diffuseness and unevenness of structure, Reymont is gifted in depicting the small and large interests of the Polish peasant, in revealing their aspirations and dormant passion for freedom.

As an example of "the novel of the soil," so close to earth that the reader often finds his senses are keen and that other faculties are almost dormant, this epic by Reymont proclaims him a masterful interpreter of peasant life. In every volume there are lapses of interest and diffuseness. In retrospect, however, the many monotonous pages will be forgotten and the out-

standing scenes of passionate love, hatred, suffering, and primitive ecstasy will remain in memory as tributes to this second Polish novelist who is listed among the Nobel prize winners in literature.

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The compiler of this bibliography has not attempted to make an exhaustive list of writings of the several prize winners; the aim is to suggest an adequate reading list, to supplement the studies of individual authors and to stimulate further research. As this book is intended, especially, for English and American readers, the foreign editions are not cited, if there is any adequate translation available; in a few cases, the works must be read in the original language.

The bibliography has been compiled largely with the assistance of librarians at the Widener Library of Harvard University, so that the books listed will be found in the card catalogue there, and at the Library of Congress. In isolated cases, the *data* have been furnished by individual writers and translators. The authors are here listed in the order of the awards, with dates appended; in the Index they are given alphabetically.

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Studies in Literature: "Some French Writers of Verse" by Edward Dowden (London, 1892).

MOMMSEN (1902)

The History of Rome, translated with the author's sanction and additions by Rev. William P. Dickson (London, 1862, 1885; New York, 1869, 1908); (*Everyman's Library,* London and New York, 1911, 1916); 5 Vols. (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1903).

Rome, from Earliest Time to 40 B. C., edited by Arthur C. Howland (Philadelphia, 1906).

The Provinces of the Roman Empire, from Cæsar to Diocletian, translated with the author's sanction and additions by Rev. William P. Dickson (New York, 1887; London and New York, 1909).

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Some Eighteenth Century Byways and Other Essays by J. Buchan (London, 1908).

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Novels, in 3 Vols., translated by R. B. Anderson, American edition (Boston, 1881).

Plays, 2 series, translated by Edwin Björkman (New York, 1913, 1914).

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When the New Wine Blooms, translated by Lee M. Hollander (*Poet Lore,* Boston, 1911).

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Adventures in Criticism by A. T. Quiller-Couch, rev. ed. (New York, 1924).

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MISTRAL (1904; shared with Echegaray)

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Mireio, from the original Provençal, under the author's sanction, translated by C. H. Grant: "An English Version of Mr. Frederic Mistral's *Mireio*" (Avignon, 1867).

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Authorized and unabridged translations from the Polish by Jeremiah Curtin: *With Fire and Sword; The Deluge; Pan Michael; Quo Vadis; Without Dogma; In Desert and Wilderness* (Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1890–1912).

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Deutschen Novellenschatz, 24 Vols., edited by Max Lentz (New York, 1899).

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Works of Maurice Maeterlinck, 27 Vols., in two editions, cloth and leather (Dodd, Mead & Co.; London and New York) includes essays, plays, poems, children's books; interpreted by several translators, including Alfred Sutro, Alexander Teixeira de Mattos, Bernard Miall, Montrose J. Moses.

Plays of Maurice Maeterlinck, translated and edited with introduction, by Richard Hovey (Chicago, 1894, 2 vols.; New York, 1911).

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The Dramatic Works of Gerhart Hauptmann, 8 Vols., edited by Ludwig Lewisohn, translations by Lewisohn and others (Huebsch, New York, 1906–1925).

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Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, 20 Vols. (The Macmillan Co., London and New York).

Gitanjali, translated by author, with introduction by W. B. Yeats (London and New York, 1913, 1916).

The Crescent Moon: Child-Poems translated from original Bengali by author (New York, 1913, 1916).

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Above the Battlefield, with introduction by G. L. Dickinson (Cambridge, England, 1914).

The Forerunner, a sequel to *Above the Battle,* translated by Eden and Cedar Paul (New York, 1920).

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KNUT HAMSUN (1920)

The writings of Hamsun, in American edition, are issued largely by Alfred A. Knopf (New York).

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